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'The Ballad of Erse O. Really?' by Gavin Ewart

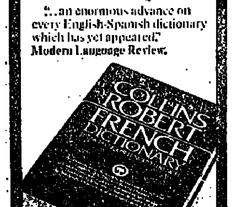
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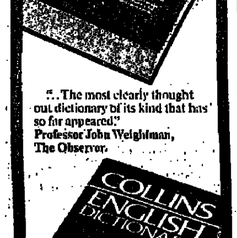
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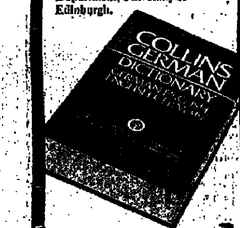
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2 MAY 1980

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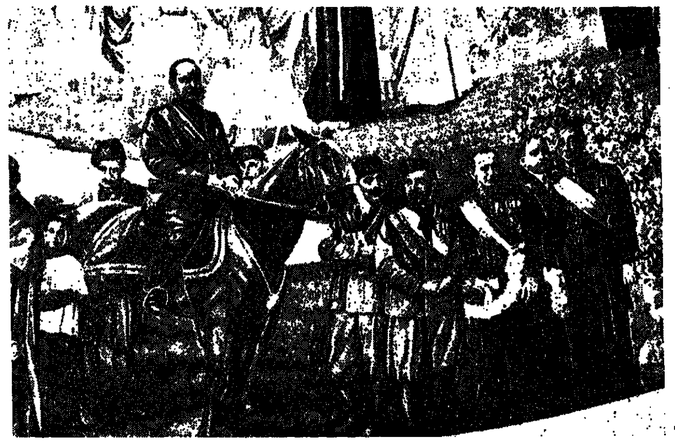
Rascals of the retinue

By Denis Mack Smith

GIORGIO ROCHAT :
Italo Balbo, aviatore e ministro dell' aeronautica, 1926-1933
226pp. Bologna : Bovolenta. L6,500.

GIORDANO BRUNO GUERRI :
Galeazzo Ciano
Una Vita, 1903-1944
719pp. Milan : Bompiani. L12,500.

SERGIO ROMANO :
Giuseppe **Volpi**
Industria e finanza tra Giolitti e Mussolini
267pp. Milan. Bompiani. L8,000.



Fascists in fresco. On horseback is Benito Mussolini; immediately to the right of his horse's head are Emilio de Bono and Italo Balbo. To their right: Guglielmo Marconi, Lawrence Wilson (a Canadian philanthropist) and the Duca degli Abruzzi; behind the horse, a sullen Michele Bianchi and Cesare de Vecchi. The fresco itself is painted on the ceiling of the apse of the church of Notre Dame de la Défense in Montreal, the church of that city's Italian community. The artist was Guido Nincheri and the fresco was inaugurated in 1933.

If a political leader can be judged by the subordinates he appoints, Mussolini must rank poorly because he chose people he distrusted and despised: "they are all rotten to the core", he once said. Most of his ministers were of far less than average competence, and some were nothing less than criminals. So sure was he of his own abilities, so anxious to appear superior, and so convinced of the stupidity and dishonesty of all mankind, that he admitted to a preference for the unintelligent and second-rate, and surrounded himself with sycophants, dissemblers and place-hunters. He had a positive gift for putting people in the wrong jobs and for disregarding all who were honest or who told him the truth; flatterers were preferred to persons of character or culture, and few of those who were brave enough to disagree with him survived long in office. He even used to say that when choosing a minister he would prefer a rascal to an honest man, and one of his better ministers called this admission the main key to understanding his personality.

Italian readers have never had much of a taste for biography, and this makes it the more interesting that three readable and scholarly books have recently appeared on the lives of three of Mussolini's more intelligent and important collaborators. Italo Balbo, Galeazzo Ciano, and Giuseppe Volpi, all started from relatively humble origins. None of them was a fascist of the first hour", but all quickly saw that their future lay with the fascist revolution. Balbo at Ferrara, Ciano at Livorno, Volpi at Venice, each constructed a local base where he was virtually untouchable, and each was anxious to go further and play a part in government. All three succeeded, becoming rich and powerful in the process, though all lived long enough to realize that Mussolini far from being the saviour they had hoped for, was leading Italy to disaster.

Balbo was one of the few people apart from Mussolini himself who played an indispensable part in the fascist victory of 1922. His home town, Ferrara, saw the first fascist breakthrough, and here it was that Balbo at the age of only twenty-five showed what could be done by terrorism on a grand scale. As an organizer of the fascist armed squads, his brutalities were the admiration of Mussolini and other fascists who were more squeamish and less imaginative.

Cynical, brave, a born leader and a ruthless hatchet-man, Balbo led his columns of organized terrorists through central Italy, leaving a trail of smoke and destruction and death behind them. Implicated too closely in the murder of a priest, he eventually in 1924 had to resign his position as commandant of the fascist militia, but by then he had used his position to become a person of considerable wealth, and had good reason to know that a criminal record, far from being a handicap, was a helpful qualification for promotion to yet higher and more lucrative office.

Balbo's main ministerial position was after 1926 at the Air Ministry where, by concentrating very successfully on world speed records, he managed to convince people that the Italian air force was the most redoubtable in the world. This was a pure illusion, and though it had excellent results as a military deterrent, regrettably it also deluded Balbo and Mussolini into thinking that the British Mediterranean Fleat could be sunk overnight whenever they chose; on the basis of such unsupportable opinions the fascist leadership assumed that the British would never dare to engage in war, or at least could be beaten by Italy in a matter of weeks.

As Giorgio Rochat shows, Balbo committed Italy to the military strategy prescribed by the legendary General Douhet: air superiority was enough by itself and navies were now a luxury, nor was there any need to waste money on anti-aircraft defence; terroristic attacks on civilians would be a decisive fact in future war; preferably by using poison-gas and perhaps bacteriological weapons; indeed, a single surprise raid on Paris or London with gas bombs might be sufficient to ensure victory. These were interesting theories but far from demonstrably true, and Balbo was a typical fascist in his refusal to let them be discussed. The result was that Italian rearmament was wrongly directed from the very first.

His next job was that of Governor of Libya in 1934, and he remained there until his death in 1940, when his plane was shot down by mistake by fire from his own batteries. Hitler thought that, had he lived, he would have made a good successor to Mussolini. In fact Balbo had already reached the conclusion that Mussolini, out of vanity and because criticism of any kind was taboo, intended to tie Italians to a German alliance from which, win or lose, they were bound to come off the worse, and he was one of the few fascists brave enough and patriotic enough to speak out.

Giordano Bruno Guerri says that towards the end he used to talk openly of the need to assassinate the Duce, and Mussolini admitted that Balbo was one of the few who might have had the enterprise and courage to kill him. One interesting irony is that, if only Balbo had spent less time on luxurious living in Libya and more on serious study of how to develop that colony, he might have realized that he was sitting on top of one of the world's great oil fields. If Rommel had not been short of oil at El Alamein in 1942, the Second World War might have run a different course.

Galeazzo Ciano was Mussolini's foreign minister from 1936 to 1943. According to his biographer he was never a genuine fascist, but many would disagree with this judgment. He is chiefly known to us through his incomparable diary, of which a somewhat bowdlerized translation was edited by Malcolm Muggeridge. This diary shows him to have been an observant but utterly indiscreet and irresponsible courtier who kept his place by continually boosting Mussolini's ego at the same time as he vied with Balbo to become the Duce's successor. Ambassador Kennedy called Ciano the most pompous ass he had ever met; Hitler referred to him as "that disgusting boy"; others have described him as a playboy, a bounder, a vulgarian who used to throw pellets of bread at official dinners, and who was shown by the photographers picking his nose as the Pact of Steel was signed in Berlin. Yet he had more intelligence and culture than most of the other top fascists. He also had a sticky charm that, together with his reputation of being the Duce's favourite, gave him social success, and Guerri assures us, somewhat improbably, that whereas Mussolini had only 169 lovers in his whole lifetime, Ciano had more in just seven years as a minister.

The appointment of such a person as foreign minister at the age of thirty-three came as something of a shock to the staid world of diplomacy, for he had few obvious qualifications except the all-important one of being Mussolini's son-in-law. Entirely obsequious to the Duce—except behind his back—he worked dutifully to secure an alliance with Nazi Germany; he, too, said that war was inevitable against France and Britain, and it would be a war that could be won without much difficulty; following his father-in-law he also asserted that the master races of the future would be Italians, Germans and Japanese, since the western democracies had been hopelessly corrupted by pacifism and by the Jews. The main difference between them was that Mussolini perhaps believed this kind of thing, while Ciano was a trimmer with both eyes on the main chance.

Italian intervention in the Spanish Civil War was one of Ciano's personal enthusiasms and it was therefore run not by the army but from his own private office. In retrospect this intervention can be seen as a huge miscalculation, because though the fascists ultimately won, they had expected it would last two weeks, not two-and-a-half years, and the cost was eventually quite crippling for Italy; as Mussolini said himself it bled Italy white and it proved to be what has been called his greatest mistake of all. Ciano moreover had a good deal of the responsibility for defying General Franco's wish and using terroristic tactics in the bombing of civilian populations. The wanton killing of prisoners, the cold-blooded assassination of the Rosselli brothers, these seem to have been by his order. A reluctant navy was also directed to send forty submarines to sink neutral shipping, and the order was that they should never surface to save any survivors. Such distressing facts were of course kept secret, but enough leaked out to start the process by which Italians turned against a regime so lacking in intelligence and morality. One interest for a biographer is that, though Ciano was not entirely lacking in good nature, the corruption of absolute power deprived him of moderation, humanity and ordinary common-sense.

When Italy invaded Albania in 1939 and Greece in 1940, these were very much Ciano's wars and he did not scruple to invent facts so as to encourage a not unwilling Mussolini into both of them. Ciano's treacherous attempts to assassinate King Zog of Albania and King George of Greece were typical of the man. So was his fatal assumption that he had successfully bribed the Greek generals to surrender after only a token resistance: the many millions spent on bribes were no doubt used by the recipients for the very opposite of what was intended, but Mussolini was calculating on having bought himself a walk-over. Several weeks after the invasion of Greece the fascist army was thrown back ignominiously into Albania, and a war that Ciano had said would last days ended by tying down half a million soldiers uselessly for three years. Another astonishing and quite elementary mistake had been made. If only the immense effort put into this debilitating and senseless side-war had been concentrated in North Africa, the British Eighth Army would have had a harder time of it.

Ciano as foreign minister was a dilettante and often it is hard to take him seriously. At a time when Italy was preparing for a major war, he hardly bothered to keep in touch with the Italian ambassadors in London, Berlin and Moscow; and his ambassador in France received only two telegrams in a whole year, one of which instructed him to find a governess for the minister's children. Ciano's excuse was that Mussolini was a genius who was bound to win without any need for the paraver of diplomatic contacts; so great a genius that Ciano always preferred to remain standing in his presence; even when the Duce telephoned, Ciano as he took the call would stand to attention and make the Roman salute with outstretched arm. Yet in private he told others that he thought Mussolini might be going mad. The chief of police testified that several times Ciano asked him to get from Himmler a tasteless poison with which he intended to kill Mussolini and take power himself; Guerri does not believe this story and says there is no confirmation of it; though on this last point (in what is a full and accurate book) he is wrong.

In January, 1944, Mussolini had Ciano executed, and this was the latter's finest moment as it was one of Mussolini's worst. The victim showed great courage as he faced a phoney trial, in which he was not allowed even to produce witnesses in his defence, and was brave enough to laugh in court at the patent absurdity of the proceedings. Several days were spent trying to persuade one lawyer after another to appear in his defence, but they all with one accord made their excuses, and subsequently Ciano's appeal for clemency was turned down without serious consideration, certainly by Mussolini's wish. In a final gruesome scene, one of the guards planted by the SS smuggled poison to him in prison, but it turned out to be innocuous when he took it; then the firing-squad botched their job and he had to be finished off with a pistol. Mussolini expressed contrition, but his daughter, Edda Ciano, never forgave him for the vindictiveness and cowardice he showed in this judicial murder.

Sergio Romano, who is a distinguished Italian diplomat, has a more grateful task with Giuseppe Volpi, "the last Doge of Venice". A more attractive person, as flamboyant and picturesque as both the others and in his own way as powerful, Volpi used his power more wisely and was far better at his job than either. He was a much older man, already a merchant prince before 1914, and he outlived the grim days of fascism. Volpi's first fortune was made in the old Ottoman empire, projecting a trans-Balkan railway and running the tobacco monopoly in Montenegro; his achievements and skills were recognized when he was chosen to lead the Italian negotiators in arranging the treaty of Ouchy with the Turks in 1912. Later he was an Italian delegate to the peace discussions at Paris in 1919. By then he was on the board of fifty different companies, many of them as chairman or managing director. A huge financial empire was based on banking, insurance, and making electricity for most of eastern Italy; he also provided water to Rome, Naples, Palermo, and Turin; later he controlled the Compagnie Internationale des Wagons Lits and, indirectly, Thomas Cook and Son in London, as well as an electricity company in Lincolnshire and part of the banking empire that is today in the news with the *crac* of the mysterious Michele Sindona. Almost certainly he was the richest man in Italy.

Volpi's political involvement became more serious when, after appointment as Governor of Tripolitania, he joined the fascist party: this was in 1923, though to make it look better he used his authority as Governor to back-date his membership card to a year earlier. In Tripoli he became a hero to Italians by initiating a policy of conquest after unilaterally denouncing a treaty with the Senussi that had allowed parliamentary government to the Arab population. Much of the best agricultural land was arbitrarily taken for distribution to Italian settlers—to himself among others. His paternalist proconsular rule left a bad memory among the Arabs, though the excavations at Leptis and Sabratha remain as evidence of some of his more constructive activity.

Back in Italy in 1925 he was appointed Minister of Finance, in which position he was forced by Mussolini to effect a major revaluation of the lira on the grounds that it was necessary for the prestige of the regime. Volpi himself would have preferred something much less severe and on this point was almost certainly correct, but he gave way and his stabilization of the lira was for some years a major burden on the Italian economy. His gifts were shown to better effect when he persuaded Britain and the United States to scale down Italy's debts by more than half; by so doing he made possible a substantial investment in Italy by outside capital, and his own private affairs became more prosperous than ever.

According to the British ambassador at the time, everyone assumed that he used his position to enrich himself and his friends by not always respectable means, but the gossip was no doubt exaggerated.

Volpi's most ambitious and perhaps most dubious enterprise was

his attempt to make Venice into an industrial city by linking it with new industrial zones on the mainland at Marghera and Mestre. Venice had always been the centre of his own economic empire, and he had to act with inconsiderate haste because, after Italy's annexation of Trieste in 1919, there was a danger that this rival city might get too much of the limited amounts of government money available. He therefore used his new political connections to get subsidies and fiscal exemptions for an immense programme of economic development; and his own interests in banking and electricity did immensely well out of it. He cannot be blamed for failing to see all the results of this development, but pollution of the city and of the lagoon was soon a major problem, and there was a further exodus of people to seek work on the mainland. Vast quantities of water had to be taken from the subsoil to feed scores of new factories, with the result that the island city began to sink, and flooding at high tide became a terrible danger with which Venice is still trying, not very successfully, to cope. It is true that Volpi gave new life to the Venice Biennale and also started music and film festivals that have flourished to this day, but his legacy to the city he loved so much was on balance unfortunate.

The fascists gave in to him over Venice, but in return demanded his loyalty and help. Repeatedly, Volpi expressed in public his personal devotion to Mussolini and hailed him as the saviour of Italy, especially after returning to a more active political life when he became president of the Fascist Confederation of Industrialists in 1934. Since the interests of the business community *had always depended on a close relation* with government, and on protective duties, credits and tax incentives that could be provided only in Rome, and since this became more and more true as fascism introduced an entirely controlled economy, he would have liked to return to a post in the cabinet; but the job he was given was that of developing the economy of the Italian empire in East Africa. Mussolini had megalomaniac ideas about setting up heavy industries in Ethiopia to equip a black army that would dominate the continent. Volpi, on the contrary, had no intention of creating a rival economy that might compete with Italian exports in international markets, and effectively dragged his feet. Many scandalous fortunes were made by entrepreneurs in Ethiopia, who exploited Mussolini's naivety and readiness to waste vast amounts of *taxpayers' money, but it seems* Volpi was not one of them.

For eight years he was on the Grand Council of fascism, and so shared direct responsibility for a number of decisions he cannot have liked, including the racial laws against the Jews and a ruthless policy of extermination in Ethiopia. But he became enthusiastic over the prospect of an Italian victory in *World War Two that would extend* Italian economic influence through Africa and the Middle East. During that war, as the spokesman of Italian industrialists, he told Mussolini the dangerous falsehood that Italian war industries were better equipped than those of Britain or the United States and could easily hold out for six years if necessary. In 1941-42 he was asked to plan a trans-African railway and also to organize the *economy of the satellite* state of Croatia at a time when the notorious Pavelic was perpetrating some of the worst atrocities of the war. Eventually, after fascism collapsed, Volpi succeeded in fleeing to Switzerland and was allowed back to Italy only in 1947 a few months before his death. Unlike Balbo and Ciano he left behind him some positive achievements.

Marxism into Fascism

By Martin Blinkhorn

A. JAMES GREGOR:

Young Mussolini and the Intellectual Origins of Fascism

271pp. University of California Press. £10.

0 520 03799 5

Italian Fascism and Developmental Dictatorship

427pp. Guildford: Princeton University Press. £15.40. (Paperback, £5.45.)

0 691 05286 7

Since 1969 A. James Gregor has published a veritable canon of works dedicated to a revisionist view of Italian Fascism and its place in the twentieth century. In *The Ideology of Fascism* (1969) he sought to convince a largely sceptical readership that Italian Fascism possessed an ideology that deserved to be taken seriously and might best be categorized as "developmental". Five years later in *The Fascist Persuasion in Radical Politics* and *Interpretations of Fascism* he suggested that Italian Fascism represents the first deliberate attempt to solve the characteristically twentieth-century problem of national backwardness, and in particular "delayed industrialization", through the device of "developmental, mass-mobilizing dictatorship".

In his two new books he delves further into what he considers two vitally related aspects of Italian Fascism which also possess much wider implications: its theoretical and practical "developmentalism" and its intellectual origins in the early twentieth-century "crisis of classical Marxism". "Without Marxism, no Fascism" does not mean to Gregor what it will probably *mean to most of those who* open his *Young Mussolini and the Intellectual Origins of Fascism* without knowing his earlier work; Fascism, he announces with barely concealed excitement, was a "Marxist heresy" born of the Italian syndicalists' gradual realization that "classical Marxism" had only limited application to so industrially retarded a country as Italy. The provocative word "heresy", while it may—as is doubtless intended—curdle the blood of present-day Marxists, is apt enough when used to describe the intellectual crisis of many revolutionary syndicalists who first lost faith in the urban working class and the Italian Socialist Party as agents of revolution, and then embraced notions of national solidarity and productivism aimed at carrying out the bourgeois-capitalist stage of development which Italy had yet to undergo.

Gregor shows, in what is the less ambitious but more successful of these two books, how the syndicalists' conviction was largely shared by Mussolini, even if it took him longer—specifically until after the Red Week fiasco of 1914—to despair of the Socialist Party's revolutionary possibilities. Through a close examination of Mussolini's early *writings and those of his syndicalist* and elitist contemporaries, Gregor illuminatingly follows the intellectual trajectory, from socialism to Fascism, of a complex individual too often dismissed as a shallow, power-hungry opportunist or, at best, a mere "revolutionary by temperament".

The concentration on Fascism's alleged *Marxist origins* does, nevertheless, raise some difficult problems. Its non-Marxist sources, especially on the Nationalist right, are both more important and less ambiguous than Gregor allows; moreover, if it is vital to tap Fascism's Marxist roots it is equally vital to ask what Italian syndicalists—and Mussolini—looked for in Marxism in the first place.

David D. Roberts, in *The Syndicalist Tradition and Italian Fascism*, has suggested recently that many of the syndicalists discussed by Gregor passed through Marxism, as it were, in search of "Marxist answers to populist problems" and, having failed to find them, escaped into national syndicalism and finally Fascism. Gregor's own account of Mussolini's early life, revealing the importance to him of national sentiment, elitism and voluntarism, may perhaps suggest that for him, too, Marxism was an ultimately dispensable — because inappropriate — means of accomplishing ends that were always "popular", and implicitly "national", rather than proletarian.

What surely *is* true is that by the time Fascism emerged as a discrete phenomenon the ex-Marxists involved in it were not so much heretics as apostates. For while it may well have been their Marxism which led them to productivism through a desire to hasten the full flowering of capitalism in Italy, once having arrived there they abandoned completely any vision of a post-capitalist future derived even remotely from Marx; productivism, class harmony and national grandeur thus became not aspects of a necessary *stage of development* but rather ends in themselves.

Italian Fascism and Developmental Dictatorship is Gregor's attempt to demonstrate that under Fascism developmental theory was put into practice. The central case, namely that Fascist rule witnessed substantial "modernization" of Italy and that this was due to the purposeful pursuit of "developmental, mass-mobilizing" policies largely conceived during Fascism's formative period, is for the most part convincingly made.

Yet the picture of Fascism which emerges in this book is a deceptively streamlined one. The ex-syndicalists whom Gregor regards as the principal authors of Fascist "developmentalism" and as having remained pivotal and influential figures throughout the regime's life were more often marginal and frustrated, something which suggests that cause and effect may not have been as neatly linked as Gregor suggests. Other aspects of Fascism—foreign adventurism and the operation of corporativism, to name only two—receive short shrift in a manner unjustified by his own stated intentions.

Where broader questions are involved, it is ironic that Gregor evidently considers it worthwhile for historians and social scientists to continue pursuing the grail of "generic fascism", *since with each of his* admirable books he himself makes the search more difficult. On the one hand Italian Fascism is classified with a whole collection of regimes which, even if adequately described as "developmental", cannot helpfully be depicted as "fascist". A "generic" phenomenon embracing Fascist Italy, Stalin's Russia, Mao's China, Castro's Cuba, Nkrumah's Ghana and the rest may well exist, but it does not follow that "fascism" is a useful label for it. On the other hand, of course, "generic fascism" may exist without "development" being the key to its identification.

If Gregor's perception of the dominant sources and central purpose of Italian Fascism is correct—and, as he acknowledges, considerably more evidence concerning Italy under Fascism is required before that can be confirmed—then rather than opening the way for a new approach to "generic fascism" it surely provides further fuel for the suspicion that the grail—however revealing the quest itself may be—is likely to retreat ever further from the grasp of those who seek it.

A Copper Amphora

On the hedge the thorns
of the prickly pears, your new
blue petticoat torn, anguish
deep in your gouged out heart,
at Lentini, perhaps, near Iacopo's place
in the marshes, learned counsel on eels
and loves. What story does the earth
tell, the trilling of blackbirds
hidden in the noonday famishing
for fruit hard with violet
and ochre-coloured seeds? Your hair
tempestuous over your ears
that no longer hear,
watercolour hair, its colour lost.
A copper amphora at a doorway
glistens with drops of water
and red wisps of grass.

Salvatore Quasimodo

Translated by Jack Bevan

Wilhelmine warmongers

By F. L. Carsten

GEOFF ELEY:

Reshaping the German Right
Radical Nationalism and Political Change after Bismarck.

357pp. Yale University Press. £15.
0 300 02386 3

Ever since Gerhard Ritter many years ago published his magisterial, and very conservative, study of *Statecraft and the Profession of Arms*, the debate on continuity in German history has continued among the historians. In 1961 it received a new and vital impetus with the publication of Fritz Fischer's famous *Griff nach der Weltmacht*, which tried to establish a continuity between German war aims in the First and in the Second World Wars—and was immediately vehemently attacked by Ritter. Since then historians in many countries have joined the fray. Although Fischer's theses have found comparatively wide acceptance, and he has since fortified his argument by a second tome, *War of Illusions*, no consensus is likely to emerge. Meanwhile the debate has shifted from a discussion of German foreign policy to that of internal developments: to what extent did the unification of Germany "through iron and blood" and Bismarck's policies after 1871 prepare the way *for the failure of the Weimar* Republic and the rise of Adolf Hitler? Was there, as Geoff Eley puts it, a "linear continuity between the Second and the Third Reichs"?

Among German historians, Hans-Ulrich Wehler has gained special prominence as the defender of an interpretation of continuity from the empire founded by Bismarck to that of *Hitler. He* not only sees Bismarck as "the great political manipulator" who pulled strings and made politicians dance like puppets; but he also finds that "in historical perspective" a road leads from the denigration of the socialists and the national minorities by Bismarck as "enemies of the Reich" to the pogroms of November 1938 and the elimination of "Volksschädlinge" by the Nazis, and that the National Socialist Party was "the legitimate offspring" of earlier right-wing parties, such as the "Vaterlandspartei" of the First World War.

Dr Eley's very detailed study of the new German Right as it came into being in the post-Bismarck period is an interesting and valuable contribution to this debate. *He is at his best when attacking* certain theses which have become fashionable in Germany, and in particular when opposing the concept of "manipulation" by "the agrarian interest" or other powerful interest groups in Germany. He does not pull any punches: "later Nazi meanings may be misleadingly read back into an earlier and different discourse"; such teleological interpretations have tended to "submerge the specific qualities of Wilhelmine nationalism beneath a series of general assumptions about the longer-term formation of the German political culture", "assumptions backed up by no empirical research". His plea is for a study of German nationalism—and the Wilhelmine period in general—as a phenomenon *sui generis*, without having constantly in mind what happened after 1933.

This plea is indeed very welcome, but somewhat difficult to follow in practice. I noticed with amusement that the last sentence of the publishers' blurb claims that the book is "an important contribution to the debate on the historical context of National Socialism"; they clearly have taken no heed of their author's plea.

Dr Eley's own research has concentrated on the various "National Associations" founded in Germany after 1890, either to promote a specific goal—naval armament, the acquisition of more colonies—or German expansion and military might in general. By far the largest of these was the "Navy League", which had well over 300,000 members organized in 3,000 branches with over 9,000 branch officers. Most of these were civil servants, teachers or white-collar workers, but—in spite of strong efforts—it did not penetrate the working classes. It failed to achieve its goal, the "unity of the nation", nor did it succeed in "winning back the embittered masses with the aid of the naval question", which was one of its primary aims. It remained "a movement of the middle classes".

The same applied even more strongly to the most pernicious of the "National Associations", the "Pan-German League", which engaged in vigorous propaganda for a more militant foreign policy and imperialist expansion. Officially it was not anti-semitic, but many of its leading members were, and it cooperated closely with anti-semitic organizations. It never had a mass membership and only possessed small funds, but among the members were many thousands of teachers whose influence shaped the next generation. To save Germany from liberalism the Pan-German leader class advocated the establishment of a dictatorship by the Emperor. As soon as the war came to an end the Pan-German League spawned an openly racialist *and anti-semitic völkisch* league to fight the revolution and democracy.

Pernicious too was the "Society for the Eastern Marches" which aimed at Germanizing the Polish provinces of Prussia and succeeded in antagonizing their Polish population. The latecomer among the "National Associations" was the "Wehrverein", founded in 1911 by leaders of the Pan-German League, to put pressure on the government in favour of a rapid expansion of the army. By 1914 it had almost 100,000 members and was an actively militarist organization.

In Dr Eley's opinion, these and other "national associations" brought about a "fundamental radicalization of the right". They were anti-democratic and potentially anti-parliamentarian, not only bitterly anti-socialist but also hostile to the Catholic mass party, the Centre. They succeeded in bringing about a "novel mobilization of the subordinate classes" and "transformed the political context in which aristocratic privileges had to be defended". But the "subordinate classes" means the lower middle, not the working classes. It is difficult to generalize, however, for some of these associations were more radical in their propaganda and more critical of the government and its policy than others. The Navy League, for example, was more pro-governmental in its attitude than some of the smaller associations; and the "Society for Germandom Abroad" was much less political in its aims than those mentioned so far. Some were "populist", and *others were not*. What they had in common was a fervent nationalism, a firm conviction that German power must be preserved and strengthened. What we would like to know is to what extent German nationalism of that time was different from French or British nationalism. Was it more strident and more aggressive, more convinced of its own righteousness, more contemptuous of other nations?

The effort to form a united national front was successful in the elections of 1907, when the number of socialist deputies was nearly halved. But in 1912 the Social Democrats not only made good these losses but, with 28 per cent of the vote and 110 deputies, became by far the strongest party *in parliament*. The national appeal had failed as the Catholic Centre had polled another 23 per cent; it had contributed its share to divide, and not to unite, the nation behind a policy of imperialism.

This book is clearly written for an academic public. The points are made clearly and on the whole convincingly. But for the non-expert there might have been a little more explanation. *Not* everybody will know who the "Naumannites" were, or what constituted the "Hibernia Affair", or what were "the two Saxonies"—the one a province of Prussia, the other a state and kingdom. And the Prussian "Minister of Culture" in fact was the minister of education. Dr Eley is very much at home in his subject, but the reader may not be all *that* familiar with the background. This is an important addition to the ever growing literature on Wilhelmine Germany.

The true voice of Clio

By J. H. Plumb

MARY MOORMAN:

George Macaulay Trevelyan
A Memoir

253pp. Hamish Hamilton. £9.95.
0 241 10358 4

G. M. Trevelyan left instructions in his will that no biography of him should be written. This was a response to a deep strain of stoical melancholy that threaded his nature but it was not a very realistic gesture—his life will be written not once but many times. His daughter has side-stepped the issue by calling her book a memoir although she deals, briefly, it is true, with parts of Trevelyan's life about which she can have no memories—his days at Harrow, his time at Trinity as an undergraduate and fellow.

Both as a life and as a memoir it is a curiously unbalanced book, for the core of it deals with Trevelyan's service in Italy during the First World War—the material for this period of his life is quite rich as he was then a most active correspondent and his letters have been preserved. However, the period subsequent to the First World War—the years of Trevelyan's fame as Britain's leading historian—is dealt with very peremptorily; presumably because the material is less rich. Trevelyan did what he could to make a biographer's life difficult by destroying most of his own records.

Nevertheless I am sure a great deal remains, some of it buried in the archives of the History Faculty in Cambridge and the archives at Trinity and at the National Trust. It is a pity that no oral history project was based on him while the Fellows of Trinity who knew him as a young man were still alive. But when the time comes there will be enough. And much, of course, is revealed in Trevelyan's own works.

The biographer will, however, *turn to this* memoir. It is an act of piety and the most attractive sides of Trevelyan's personality (and they were many) are shown to advantage—his deep concern for his country and his friends; his passionate loyalty; his unstinting work for the countryside; the love *that* he had for literature and history; his utter dedication to his talent.

During my lifetime as a historian I have met only two colleagues who impressed me as very great men—Trevelyan and Namier; as the years have passed, Trevelyan's greatness endures, Namier's diminishes. Namier had a towering personality, a capacity for concentration denied to the majority of even very clever men, a sharp analytical mind of great dialectical skill; but he was—and this has become increasingly apparent as the years have passed—lacking in a *sense of human realism*.

Such a criticism would have hurt him deeply as he took pride in what he thought to be his knowledge of character, cutting through the humbug and laying bare the corruption and weaknesses of men in pursuit of power. The pursuit of power, the pursuit of place and profit, these subjects brought that harsh, almost sadistic, gleam to his eye: but he was too clever to be satisfied with a shallow cynicism, he was aware of the ways in which men could console themselves for being either failures or merely losers. The victors and the defeated had need of ideas to clothe their nakedness but he could hardly allow that men might pursue ideas for their intrinsic value.

Hence Namier was at his best *with characters such as the Duke* of Newcastle, Lord North or George III: at his worst with complex intellectuals such as Edmund Burke, and totally baffled by a John Wilkes, whom he could only see as a licentious exhibitionist. Namier could never have been moved by the thought of Garibaldi and the Thousand. Thus he could never grasp or give proper weight to the public politics of the 1760s or to the divisive effects on Britain of America's fight for independence.

And he had grave weaknesses as a historian—he never wrote a book. He lacked the capacity to construct a narrative; all of his work consisted—like that of J. H. Round whom he much resembled—of analytical essays. Nor was he gifted as a stylist. He was capable *of an epigram, of a terse and telling* sentence; but paragraphs and chapters were beyond him. He quoted too much, and flogged his concepts nearly to death.

Trevelyan proved to be right in his judgment of Namier. Stomping around the dene at Hallington which he loved to do and mainly in silence, he stopped and said sharply and repeatedly, "Namier", and then he came out with his opinion: "Great research worker; no historian". And Trevelyan was totally without envy. Indeed he had been responsible for promoting Namier's career at a most critical moment (Namier recognized this and told me proudly of his generous gesture in consequence—he had never reviewed any of Trevelyan's books). Trevelyan's judgment was harsh yet just. Through Namier we know more about day-to-day actions in the House of Commons in the 1760s than anyone before his day would have thought it possible to know.

And yet there were immense limitations to Namier's work judged as research activity. When he decided to devote what remained of his professional life to the history of Parliament in George III's reign, it proved extremely difficult for Kitson Clark and myself to persuade him that he must write the history of the constituencies as well as the biographies of their members. And his reluctance on this issue can be seen from the poverty of many of the potted histories of constituencies in his book—all too frequently the newspapers, the pamphlets, the political ballads are ignored. The clash of political attitudes outside the House of Commons is the most exciting aspect of the first decade of George III's reign; Namier rigidly excluded it from his interest. However, his work has stimulated a great debate, a debate which is going against rather than for Namier, because of his limitations.

Trevelyan was not very interested in Namier's type of work. He well realized its value. He was prepared, cautiously, to use its results. Trevelyan wanted to do two things in writing history: to tell for his time the story of great events, and to reach through these events to human character—its heroism, its endurance, its follies and its weaknesses. He was searching like a poet for human truth in time and attempting to make us feel it. That is why he thought that history must always be a part of literature. The historian had to have empathy, a writer's empathy, as well as a scientist's love of fact.



Three generations in 1910: George Otto Trevelyan, seated, with G. M. and Theo, whose death from appendicitis the following year was "the supreme sorrow" of G. M. Trevelyan's life.

Like most richly creative men, Trevelyan wrote very fast. The *History of England took him only just* over two years. His output over a long and busy life (although interrupted for five years by the war during his most creative period) was very large, as indeed was Macaulay's or Gibbon's before him. Creative men usually write a lot, not a little. And it is with Macaulay and Gibbon that he has to be compared. He could write with a greater poetic beauty than either of them yet never with so sharp, or so confident an intelligence as they. Indeed Trevelyan wrote the most beautiful historical prose of any British historian: but there is a lack of intellectual bite.

He is now probably at the nadir of his reputation—some of his books, although far from all, have gone out of print although the major works are still available and still bought and still read. His revival will come when he is seen more strongly in the context of his age, and then, I suspect, he will loom over the twentieth century as Macaulay looms over the early nineteenth. He has, alas, few rivals. History, even before Trevelyan's day, was beginning to draw more and more men and women of high intelligence and little creativity. They were concerned with problems or with fact collection, the former often insoluble, the latter unreadable. At the same time the social function of history has steadily weakened during this century. As history grew more academically professional, it became more socially useless and ineffective—at least in intellectual circles and in education, though not with the public at large, who still want history as literature, and still see it, as did Trevelyan, as one of the great creative activities of man. That is why the public buy Clarendon, Gibbon and Macaulay, and will buy Trevelyan. Trevelyan's was a far lonelier voice than it need have been but it was the one true voice of Clio.

Not, I think, that Trevelyan's greatness lay purely in his work—it lay also in his personal qualities. Absolute integrity and total honesty combined to make him one of the greatest men I have ever met. And that man is brought vividly alive in Mrs Moorman's highly personal memoir.

Happy hunting ground

By Ronald Blythe

DESMOND HAWKINS:

Cranborne Chase

192pp. Gollancz. £7.95.
0 575 02768 1

In endless great and small matters the history of Cranborne Chase could be seen as a miniature of rural England at large. Strangely, since it offers a striking epitome of so much that occurred on the national scale, Desmond Hawkins's is the first full account of this ancient hunting-ground since 1841, when T. W. Wake Smart wrote his well-known *Chronicle* of the district. The present work acknowledges its debt to this book but is far more than an up-dating of an old authority. For one thing, venerable though the Chase was in years when Smart described it, many of the products of its stiffly legalized insularity have only burst their seals, *so to speak*, during the past three or four generations of its rulers and their neighbours. One might almost say "vassals", for Chase law as a social system contrived to impose many a Norman restraint on the locals right up to the present, evoking for the reader a kind of mainland Sark.

The most likely reason why Cranborne Chase as an entity has been neglected by *modern topographers* is that it has always shown a total indifference to the boundary claims of Dorset, Hampshire and Wiltshire, and sprawls across all three counties. In this it reminds us that neither the hunters nor the hunted can be halted by such line drawing, though both have to come to terms with the rivers in their path: the Stour and the Avon, and their contributory streams, which define the limits of the Chase, not any single shire. There are numerous instances of these social and natural autonomies within the county framework. East Anglia's Breckland was a perfect one until the 1920s, when the Forestry Commission and the Army between them obliterated a scene which had existed virtually unchanged since the Stone Age, and which, like Cranborne Chase, possessed its own mysterious dimension.

"Chase?" Simplifying what is gone into with satisfying thoroughness here, a chase is a hunting ground whose owner's application of forest law was restricted. When the medieval kings made gifts of parts of the royal forests to their subjects, they retained the *ultimate* legal prerogatives which governed them. There thus emerged forest law and chase law, and, as much of Mr Hawkins's study points out, a fine old litigious mass of leafy niceties it all was, giving vent to claims and pretensions as meandering and twisting as any path through the woods.

Not that Cranborne itself was exactly a gift to start with. Having got into the hands of the de Clare family, they "in some final and irrevocable way" managed to arrange an ownership which was to affect the way in which people lived and worked in this beautiful place for the next six centuries. Disafforested, legally speaking, the Chase acquired a twilight status, because its goings-on were too insignificant, rather than too murky, to attract much outside interest. It is the scholarly and highly readable setting-down of this defiant insularity which brings such interest now; this and the freshness of the venue on a map where little remains to explain.

Topographers apart, the uniqueness *of the Chase had a remarkable* effect on the local literary intelligence. Hardy notes the ancient rhythm of this chalky plateau in *Tess*, and Hudson makes it the workaday landscape of his *A Shepherd's Life*. As it was also the home of Shelley's mother and Browning's family, who can say to what non-parochial climates such a feudal holding might not reach out? That magnificent hymn-writer Sir William Kethe ("*All people* that on earth do dwell"), a Chase priest, was certainly universal. Approaching the area from the south via Shaftesbury, writes Hawkins, is like stumbling on to a lost world: "Here the chalk scarp rears up steeply; a winding zigzag road twists round hairpin bends to reveal suddenly a broad plateau that undulates into the blue distance. . . . One can see the Needles thirty miles away. And as night gathers . . . the eye ranges in an eagle's vision across the sandy heathlands of Hardy's Egdon to the twinkling lights of the coastal towns."

The Chase is ringed with towns. *They are positioned* regularly along its outer bounds like towers in a castle wall; Wilton, Salisbury, Ringwood, Blandford, Shaftesbury and Tisbury. Pitched straight across it is Ackling Dyke, which connects Badbury Rings with Old Sarum and Stonehenge. Tracks and roads of all times criss-cross its 250,000 acres, from the Ox Drove and the Via Regalis to the walks which eventually split the hunting ground *into the factious administration of* the Arundells, the Wardours, the Herberts, the Ashleys, the Frekes—and the Cecils. It was Robert Cecil who, securing "a large mixed bag of Crown properties in 1599", saw that he had got something quite special in Cranborne and who before he died had secured the lordship of the Chase, which had been held by the Crown without interruption ever since the distant days of *Edward IV. The other of these* Chase rulers who receives the full treatment here, and justifiably so, is General Augustus Pitt-Rivers (Augustus Lane-Fox) the distinguished archaeologist, who while his Victorian neighbours were building stables, kennels, churches, houses etc, was creating his splendid anthropological museum. The General also laid out an exquisite pleasure garden complete with open-air theatre and sports ground round an old wych-elm known as "The Larmer Tree", which drew both carriage and bicycle folk in their thousands. It was a far cry from the slaughter of buck, doe, fox, marten and roe, the traditional beasts of the chase. Hardy danced there in 1895.

The actual freeing of the Chase inhabitants from their archaic trammels, its disfranchisement by Act of Parliament, took place in 1829. But long after this farmers, particularly, found themselves in trouble when trying to produce food on ground which for centuries had been dedicated to the ultimate patrician recreation. Not the least aspect of this excellent and unusual local history is that in which it reveals the role of blood sports in influencing the values of the aristocracy. And it is something in the way of progress to know that Cranborne Chase is likely to be far more delightful now, with its pre-history on view and its little herds of deer (including two new species, sika and muntjac) occasionally culled but never pursued, *than in Rufus's day when it was all* "monotonous and undifferentiated woodland". Better for the woodwards and cottars too. Finally it must be said that the author has a kind of genius for discovering the heartbeat and drama of property rights. And how important that he should, for these have meant more to most of the men who have ruled the Chase than anything including, one suspects, hunting itself.

Irrealist deconstruction

By Zachary Leader

GILBERT SORRENTINO:
Mulligan Stew
445pp. Marion Boyars. £7.95.
0 715 2700 9

Anthony Lamont, the central character in *Mulligan Stew*, is a second-rate avant-garde novelist struggling to write a "Sur-Neofictional" murder mystery ("Sur-Neofiction" being a jokey version of something like Borges's already jokey "irrealism"). Chapters from this novel, the title of which changes in mid-stream, mix with often quite lengthy extracts from Lamont's notebook and scrapbook and with letters he writes to his sister Sheila (at work on a comparative study of George Herbert and Bob Dylan), to a professor named Roche, whose welcome interest in Lamont's work fades mysteriously as the novel progresses (has it been sabotaged by Sheila's husband, Dermot Trellis, a rival novelist Lamont deplores and distrusts?), and to assorted girl-friends old and new, including Lorna Flambeaux, poetess. We are also, among much else, treated to scenes and chapters from Lamont's earlier writings, an excerpt from the Irish Western, *Red Dawn*, upon which Trellis is at work, and all twelve erotic poems from Miss Flambeaux's sequence "The Sweat of Love".

The central characters in Lamont's novel are Ned Beaumont, Martin Halpin, and Daisy Buchanan. They come, respectively, from Dashiell Hammett's *The Glass Key*, a single footnote from *Finnegans Wake* ("I have heard this word used by Martin Hulpin, an old gardener from the Glens of Antrim who used to do odd jobs for my grandfather, the Rev B. B. Brophy of Swords") and *The Great Gatsby*. Halpin narrates Lamont's novel, and in its first chapter, set in a cabin by a wind-whipped lake, finds himself musing distractedly on the body of Ned Beaumont, lying, dead before him. Halpin knows neither where he is nor whether (or why) he has, as he suspects, murdered Beaumont; and in subsequent chapters, through *flashback, he tries to reconstruct* what has happened. In the course of these chapters we learn that he and Beaumont were friends and partners in publishing and that almost as soon as Beaumont met and fell for Daisy (Daisy having first fallen for him), two Pynchonesque temptresses, Carrie Corriendo and Bertha Delamode, seduced him into personal and financial ruin. Halpin, appalled by Beaumont's disintegration, meets and falls for the forsaken but still bedazzling Daisy, who just surviving with her 2 stupendously enjoyable ten-page orgy engineered by Bertha and Carrie: hence his suspicion—confirmed in one chapter, denied in the next—that he has murdered Ned.

Then there are episodes in which Halpin and Beaumont step not just out of character but out of Lamont's novel itself, commenting —usually *to deplore* as haphazard, clumsy, or improbable—upon what Lamont makes them say or do. These episodes are, after the opening, the best parts of *Mulligan Stew* (I refuse to call them "ingredients", or to stoop to the comparably easy "tasty" or "confection"). They derive, in the first place from Flann O'Brien's *At-Swim-Two-Birds* (the source, also, of Dermot Trellis), as well as from more fashionable post-modernist notions of the independence or anteriority, what Derrida calls the "productivity", of texts. The most important of the conceits Sorrentino develops out of these sources is that fictional characters exist independently of their supposed creators, and will, if left alone for too long or manhandled, either rebel or hide or develop inexpected complexes or much their authors. This is especially likely if they're employed by a novelist like Lamont, who is slack and confused as well as pretentious and awkward, more often than not whining to Sheila or reading over-shippers: "Only, I did not see myself." there is an echo here, as elsewhere, of James Agee's novel about a boy's adolescence, *The Morning Watch*. Like that novel, *The Colonist* is semi-autobiographical, and its faults are those of too private, too contemplated an account of remembered experience. Its virtues are in the writing, which reveals at times a poet's sensitivity to the contours of a landscape that is both physical and emotional.

To these intriguing dislocations must be added others that derive from Lamont's manic decline into paranoid fantasy. All of a sudden, *Sheila, Dermot*, Miss *Flambeaux* (and almost everyone else from Lamont's life—all of them, he thinks, conspiring against him) turn up in the novel. Chapter 12 appears mysteriously on his desk (we learn this *after* we've read it): "Completely written, typed! I read with rising fear, terror. *I did not write this chapter. . . . They*, of course have done it" (and they probably have). Then Halpin, previously sane and reliable, begins to lose his grip—and from within the novel, while narrating:

> To think that even Daisy, Daisy of the gorgeous eyes, is an insubstantial thing! Yet it may well be true. I have noticed that, at times, I have slipped into her wondrously creative speech patterns and syntax. Is it that she has slipped into mine?

Is there such a thing as "syntax"? Has there ever been? How Ned Beaumont would laugh at me, did he exist. Did he exist? Or have I . . .?

Disruptions or deconstructions of this sort are, of course, well-worn features of post-modernist or "irrealist" fiction (as is Sorrentino's obvious defence against the charge that they're well-worn: *Mulligan Stew* being a *parody* of *avant-garde* fiction, not the thing itself). In fact, all the expected features of what can now be called a genre (the "new novel" being at least forty years old) are here displayed: endless lists; hard or arcane words (*canonnic, nib, sabot, fetor, gibbous*); defensively ironic quotation marks around challengeable words or phrases; funny names; dead-pan, demi-speech; page after page of *questions and answers*, many of them non-sequiturs (this is the sort of thing you find—in a Sorrentino list); simple foolishness; cheap jokes; breaking up an already disrupted narrative with playlets (in this case a thirty-eight page musique), dialogues, pseudo-scientific *pamphlets*; innumerable allusions and *hommages*; fake bad writing; cute flawed grammar; and a compulsion (more Whitmanesque than Joycean: Sorrentino being anything but fastidious) to include and embrace everything.

Readers need to be warned, for instance, that many of the book's lists (of characters, journals, pairs of trousers, clichés, and so on) are murderously boring; in part because every twelfth or so item is funny or inventive enough—take, for example, the names of such periodicals as "Yankee Toiler," "*Organic Illness Weekly*", "Inept Surgeon's Review"—to prevent one from skipping. So, too, with Sorrentino's disconcertingly clumsy ear for bad writing, as in the above publishers' rejection notice, the preface *Mulligan Stew*: the gem ("Although we admired the writing just as *writing*, I am afraid we could not respond to the book as a whole") float on a sea of lax sparkling or inventive parody. *Mulligan Stew*, in short, is often irritating as well as demanding, and only readers as inexhaustible or indiscriminate as its author are likely to find it wholly satisfactory (as a *book*)—despite many fine and funny passages.

Imperialist friendship

By David Wilson

MICHAEL SCHMIDT:
The Colonist
125pp. Frederick Muller. £5.95.
0 584 31058 0

The epigraph to Michael Schmidt's first novel is taken from the tenth Psalm, whose sentiments ("For he lieth waiting secretly . . . that he may ravish the poor.") rather misrepresent what follows. A balancing quotation might have been taken from *Housman, for this is a novel* about childhood which deals in the ambiguous connection between remembrance and regret. It begins, indeed, with an interrogation of memory's capacity to deceive, to arrange the fragments of circumstantial evidence. "Nothing changes", says the narrator, "each thing becomes in time more itself, defined, uniquely broken."

The suggestive ambiguity of that "uniquely broken" is not sustained beyond this prefatory self-questioning. *The Colonist* is a novel with allegorical ambitions; and though it achieves them, it does so at the *expense of at least some of the* subtlety promised by its opening reflections on the little lies of memory. The narrator's blue remembered hills are a warm island, a weekend retreat to which, as the sickly child of a British businessman in Mexico, he was sent to convalesce. He spends his adolescence there, under the surrogate maternal care of a Mexican nanny, and here also he befriends Chayo, the boy who tends the garden.

The friendship, hesitant at first, soon becomes an idyll of shared secrets and confidences hatched by candlelight. The boys establish a bond which represents for them an unspoken revenge against the parents who have abandoned them. It is the destruction of that bond, innocently established but sustained only by duplicity, which Michael Schmidt's narrator is anxious to understand.

The novel attempts a balance between adult reflection and childhood experience, but inevitably the adult memory undermines the credibility of the child's innocence. The events of the friendship, presented as random snapshots (in very short chapters), assume the too-ordered pattern of a theme. The *bond breaks as* the English boy tries to possess his Mexican friend, in effect to colonize him. Their inequality destroys the chance of anything more than a passing connection.

There is a determinist slant to the novel's account of this relationship, of which the boys themselves seem self-consciously aware. The English boy gives some rudimentary history lessons to his Mexican friend, inviting him to his bed after teaching him to wash in a warm shower and dry himself with a soft, clean towel: fortunately—or not—their authority is Bernal Diaz on the *conquest of Mexico*. In turn, he learns from Chayo about gorpions and the seductive luxuriance of a Mexican garden: Difference is all: the boys swap clothes for forbidden sorties to the local town), and stressed to the point where it drains the friendship of much other than thematic interest.

The difference is of class and race, but also of religion. The novel's *most persuasive expression of the* English boy's conflicting impulses (and the point is only if once too often made that he has the freedom to choose between them) is in its contrast between the dry, bland, imported facts of an Episcopalian creed and the alluring uncertainties of a lively infected Catholicism. In the Catholic church, the English boy notes that the fresco has a familiar, homely appearance, its faces reflecting those of the worshippers: "Only, I did not see myself." there is an echo here, as elsewhere, of James Agee's novel about a boy's adolescence, *The Morning Watch*. Like that novel, *The Colonist* is semi-autobiographical, and its faults are those of too private, too contemplated an account of remembered experience. Its virtues are in the writing, which reveals at times a poet's sensitivity to the contours of a landscape that is both physical and emotional.

Presidential character

By Charles Wheeler

LOUIS AUCHINCLOSS:
The House of the Prophet
275pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. £6.95.
0 297 77765 3

Louis Auchincloss's twenty-third novel is a taut and elegant study of a distinguished American whose closest friends cannot decide whether they like or detest him. He is a political commentator and syndicated columnist, Felix Leither, who becomes, as the late Walter Lippmann did, a national sage and unpaid adviser to half a dozen Presidents. The resemblance to Lippmann ends there; if the author consciously or otherwise, is using a model, the egg that springs to this reader's mind is a more controversial, contemporary seer, presently waiting in the wings for a cue to reappear in a starring role as the world's principal travelling statesman. But that too is an over-simplification. There is more than a trace in Leitner's make-up of a former British Ambassador in Washington. And other readers may catch glimpses of at least one of the Kennedy brothers.

The House of the Prophet is an examination of the futility of character assessments. As the author's principal narrator remarks,

> It is possible, even in the lifetimes of our very greatest men, to persuade their friends and acquaintances to record on tape their most intimate impressions of these individuals. All you have to do is wave in their faces the sacred banner of history. The files of our universities are filled to overflowing with unpublished recordings of the fears, the neuroses, the sexual habits, even the bowel movements of our public figures. . . . But he who ventures into the field must always remember that his principal enemy is still the same who afflicted the chroniclers of old: the so-called witness who is really a would-be biographer himself, the person who is giving you not so much a memory as a creation, the man who has his own obsession, loving or hateful, about your subject.

The narrator, Roger Cutler, is afflicted by sexual impotence and has tentative literary aspirations. He attaches himself to the older Leitner, becomes his acolyte and confidant, and discovers a purpose in life in the great man's shadow, helping to create an emotional climate in which the finest brain of his day can function smoothly for the greater benefit of mankind. When Leitner dies in his eighty-third year, almost friendless and in the wake of a tantrum, Cutler becomes his biographer, adding to his own recollections three accounts of periods in his life written by Leitner himself, and further contributions from people who were close to him and whose lives he manipulated. These include his two ex-wives (a dowdy, warm, intelligent, radical lawyer, whom he leaves when she objects to his growing attachment to the Establishment, and her successor, a tinny socialite who leaves him when he is rude to 109 people at her Georgetown dinner parties.

Auchincloss paints a vivid, painstaking portrait of his subject without delivering a verdict. Perhaps Leitner is a misunderstood man: But he is in many ways a monstrous creation. Maddeningly sure of his own intellectual infallibility, he habitually speaks on social occasions "in an easy tone that takes wonderfully for granted the room's total attention". He is fastidious though a socialist by conviction to the end of his life; he turns against the Left because he cannot bear its adherents' bad manners and habit of shouting. And he is shamelessly immodest:

> By the time America entered the *First World War*, I had become so convinced that the future of man would depend on the terms of the ultimate peace-treaty that I considered it my duty, at any price, to find a way of working on them. . . . I truly believed that I had ideas that the world could not afford to lose and that a bullet through my brain would eliminate a feeble force for war, but a vital one for peace.

When his death comes many years later, though, it is non-violent, and the funeral service in Washington's National Cathedral is attended by many hundreds of the brightest and the best—possibly because the White House has announced that President Ford will be there. There are obituatory editorials and, briefly, much public lamentation. And with that Auchincloss's enigmatic hero passes into history.

Those First Moments

How far does one's care for the body carry?
Somewhere in some way a line has been drawn,
Short of the flames, short of the ossuary—

But what of those first moments, when the soul,
As often envisaged, flutters uncertainly,
Ashamed to twitch at a rather unfastened?
The body is not discarded so easily.

In the East, girls learn to compose their limbs in bed.
One's body, lying in the street, would like some decency.

As the young were told: don't put on pretty undies
For an outing, you may be tempted to remove them—
So the old reflect: a perfect stranger can undress
You any day, cleanliness is next to . . . something.

The body slumps against low railings.
Here's a fine fast-flowing river, hums the soul,
Peering out of bleary eyes:
Water answers several questions . . . washed and willing.

The body straightens up, as if accosted.
Easy on, the soul says: can't you take a joke?
But neither laughs. In silence and in step
They make for home, a hot bath and scented soap.

D. J. Enright

Where shall wisdom be found?

By Jeremy Treglown

DAVID LODGE:
How Far Can You Go?
213pp. Secker and Warburg. £5.95.
436 25661 4

David Lodge's new story is about Faith, and one of its successes is not only to make the subject—at its narrowest, nothing more nor less than Roman Catholic theology and practice in England (and, to a much smaller extent, America) in the last thirty years—interesting, but to remind its readers that *faith* is the substance of fiction.

It is no accident that just as people brought up as Catholics have often taken most readily to the new intellectual systems of the twentieth century—to Marxism in politics, to structuralism in aesthetic theory—*so they have been associated with* the strongest kinds of anti-authoritarianism: student struggles, and in literature the *nouveau roman*. In France and in South America, to take the obvious examples, rules can still simultaneously excite passionate adherence and passionate rejection. As David Lodge points out in *How Far Can You Go?*, there is an analogy not only between religious belief and the fictional imagination but also between post-war attitudes to ethical rules and modernist aesthetics:

> For we all like to believe, do we not, if only in stories? People who find religious belief absurd are often upset if a novelist breaks the illusion he has created . . . in matters of belief (as of literary convention) it is a nice question how far you can go . . . without throwing out something vital.

It would be easy to argue with the comparison. People who change their beliefs as often as they change their library books, for example, may be sensitive and intelligent, but are not generally thought of as *having* beliefs, in any meaningful sense. There is a point in the metaphor, though, even if to say so is not to claim that one has any responsibility for spotting it. Lodge is, of course (this is the "of course" literal rather than rhetorical): he tells us his job, teaching English literature "at a redbrick university". In the course of the novel(s) an academic and his fiction is both itself *and a learned* commentary on itself. If his readers failed to understand his story, he would deserve not only to see the book remaindered but to lose his job. But we could not fail: he tells us so inwardly and so frequently what he is up to that he itself deprives us of one of the main pleasures in reading fiction: interpretation. "How far can Christians go?", the reader may find himself asking on page 88, connecting Lodge's title with the description at this point of the Church's demythologising of the Bible after Vatican II. But in case he does not ask it, Lodge puts the *question himself on page* 89: "And the Resurrection . . .? Well, here even the most adventurous demythologizers hesitated (it was another kind of How Far Could You Go?)".

The novel's discussion of faith which at its most straightforward (and by no means least absorbing) is a simple expository account of doctrinal developments, is exemplified, as in a parable, by a narrative about the lives of all the members of a group of Catholic friends, first encountered as undergraduates and last seen resolving, with more or less suffering and finality, the sexual upheavals of early middle-age. Some marry in the course of the story, one becomes a nun, one realises he is homosexual. One of the married people goes mad, one of the couples has a mongol baby and then loses another child in a road accident. There are "affairs", some damaging, some not (a difference unrelated to their importance), and there are similarly varied crises of belief.

All this is managed, with considerable warmth and humour. There are moments of unobtrusive pathos (the mongol child Nicole's ambiguous remark, for example, as she and a romantic friend, who is watching because it precedes *Blue Peter*: "first they kiss . . . then it's finished"), and of underplayed comedy. Dennis, not wanting to resign the chair of the secretary he is embracing adulterously across his desk, keeps hold of it as he walks round to her side, "as if performing some stately dance". And, as in all his novels, Lodge writes with force and accuracy about the ordinary dealings of ordinary couples. He can be seen as the English Alison Lurie.

These qualities help to counteract what often seems the wilful ploddingness of his redbrick prose: "Violet made a very late . . . appearance at the feast. She looked very ill and anxious, very much as she had looked just before her nervous breakdown". "To Dennis the diagnosis of Nicole's condition had been a stunning and totally surprising blow." If "redbrick" sounds patronizing, it is Lodge's own adjective, and he has always gone out of his way in his fiction not only to write about, but to side with, what he clearly recognizes as provincial and dull: a rejection of elegance which seems related to the pedagogical aspects of his work.

His first, little-known fiction was, as it happens, a tract. Called *About Catholic Authors* and published in 1957 in the Catholic "Tell Me Father" series, it consists of four letters from "Fr Aloysius Brown" to an earnest young man on National Service called Anthony. The letters are homiletic literary essays of a doggedly theological kind, but they are interesting for the relationship they bear to the later stories, not only in their highly artificial use of a conventional fictional form, but in their concern for the links *between fiction and belief, imagination* and reality. "My dear Anthony". Letter III robustly begins, "I think it's about time we moved on from the land of make-believe to the territory of hard fact!"

It's a change of place Lodge still *insists on. The new story interleaves* fiction and argument with a bald, almost hackneyed rehearsal of key historical events in the period covered. (The post-war years, one remembers, saw Current Affairs introduced alongside Literary Appreciation in every school's sixth-form curriculum.) But if so much factual narrative is the least successful part of the story, what it enables is a mutual substantiation of the real and the imagined worlds, the historical lending the fictional authenticity, the fiction giving emotional weight to reality. "History" is shown not only as profoundly affecting individual lives, but as repeating on a larger scale domestic ironies and tragedies: the death of a fictional child is juxtaposed with what happened in Aberfan.

The real in this story is not principally a matter of events, though—as it might be in, say, a war-novel—so much as one of assumptions. As in *Changing Places*, a shift—geographical or metaphorical—in moral environment produces a shift in personality. And it is here that Lodge's novel is both least calculated-seeming and most powerful. He sees morality as a tragic force: for example, in the fact that a well-intentioned and deeply-considered decision about methods of birth-control can lead to the congenital deformation of a child. To try to act well, in the most intimate circumstances, is as fraught with danger and confusion as to try to fight well in a battle.

Half-way through, one of the characters—a priest undergoing a crisis of faith—preaches on a text from Job. There is no arbiter between us, Job says of his relationship *with* God: "Nonetheless, I shall speak, not fearing him . . . I shall let my embittered soul speak out. I shall say to God, 'Do not condemn me, but tell me the reason for your assault. Is it right for you to injure me, cheapening the work of your own hands?'" The point of the Biblical story, which is a myth, Father Brierley explains to his somnolent congregation, is that "God only spoke to Job because Job complained to God" on humanity's behalf.

How Far Can You Go? is another such complaint, a point Lodge for once *does not labour*, although (or perhaps because) it is so central. The God of this story afflicts his people not with boils but with a plague—what Lodge sees as *the* post-war plague—of moral uncertainty. If Lodge's way of writing about its symptoms and outcome sometimes seems clinical, plagues are perhaps best dealt with that way—that way and with the other gifts Lodge has, of truthfulness, humour and righteous indignation.

Look here, upon this picture, and on this

By Vernon Scannell

STAN BARSTOW:
A Brother's Tale
206pp. Michael Joseph. £5.75.
0 7181 1893 6

Stan Barstow's work which, before the publication of *A Brother's Tale*, consisted of six novels and two collections of short stories written over a period of about twenty years, has earned him a reputation as a painstaking and observant chronicler of working-class life and mores in the industrial north of England, a reputation which has perhaps been a little overshadowed by the more opportunist and meretricious fiction of John Braine. In his new novel, Barstow has confined himself to the territory and society he knows so well, but has attempted something more ambitious in formal and psychological terms than in his previous writings, though still working within the framework of traditional English realism.

The narrator is Gordon Taylor, a Yorkshire English teacher whose brother Bonny, younger by two years, is—or has been—a successful First Division soccer player in the George Best mould, brilliantly egotistical, the darling of the terraces in his moments of spectacular triumph, but an object of their loathing and contempt when he succumbs to the temptations attending the fame and comparative wealth that are his rewards: he becomes a hell-raising womanizing boozer, with inevitably deleterious effects on his performance as a player. Bonny, suspended by his club, persecuted by both the press and the fickle public, seeks refuge in the home of Gordon and his wife, Eileen, and the young celebrity's presence there works dramatic and traumatic changes in what had hitherto seemed to be a firmly-based edifice of conjugal certainties. The ambivalent nature of the relationship between Gordon, the dependable hard-working schoolmaster, and his gifted but unstable brother, is explored with insight and emotional tact.

In flashback—and the time-shifts in *A Brother's Tale* are manipulated smoothly and with considerable dramatic point—we discover that Gordon, as an undergraduate, had fallen in love with a beautiful, eighteen-year-old Catholic girl called Frances McCormack, the daughter of a prosperous local builder, but that any hope of her reciprocating his passion had been doomed the moment she saw the sexually irresistibly Bonny. She does not meet Gordon again until some months later when he emerges from a pub on a Saturday night to find her waiting for him in her smart sports car. She persuades him to accept a lift home because she has something important to tell him. Her news—and it seems a weakness in the plot that Gordon should have been in ignorance of it—is that she and Bonny have been seeing each other, that she is helplessly in love with him but he has emphatically discarded her and refuses to meet her or answer her letters. She wishes Gordon to arrange a meeting so that she can talk to his brother. As she is recounting her unhappy tale she becomes increasingly distraught, loses control of the car and crashes. Gordon is injured, though not too severely, but Frances is killed. Subsequently it appears that she was two months pregnant. No one except Gordon and Bonny is aware of the identity of the unborn child's father.

This incident from the past is obviously one which must continue to affect the attitudes of the brothers to each other. Bonny remains unrepentant, ruthlessly self-regarding, an exploiter of others' susceptibility to his glamour and charm, and it is an index of Barstow's maturing skill in characterization that he can persuade the reader of the potency of that charm. Much of this is achieved through dialogue, and Bonny's talk, slick and occasionally quite witty, yet somehow uncompromisingly honest, conveys the flavour of the man's personality, the oddly attractive mixture of arrogance and self-doubt, the recklessness and vulnerability. Bonny convinces, both as a unique *individual* and as a representative type, the child blessed by extraordinary gifts, who grows into the adult who must be, almost inevitably, destroyed by them or, rather, by some flaw or flaws in his personality that make it impossible for him to control and direct those gifts. Gordon, the narrator, is perhaps less persuasively drawn.

Barstow has never been much of a stylist. It could be argued that the steady tramp of his rhythm, the careful setting down of every detail, the avoidance of anything resembling rhetoric add to the general sense of *truthfully recorded experience*. But when, as on the first page of *A Brother's Tale*, he writes: "I pondered the wisdom of offering him a scotch, then decided it was up to him to accept or refuse. I sat at once felt like one myself, and when he joined me he sipped it with no sign of unseemly appetite" the prose is not just plain but lame and overweight. And a little later in the novel Gordon, chatting in a pub to one of his evening-class students, speaks of:

> . . . the assumptions you make instead of looking squarely and directly at a subject, and describing it in vivid concrete detail and leaving your reader to draw his own moral and emotional conclusions from it. What you do is lend your work with abstract concepts designed to ensure an automatic and predictable response in your reader.

Now, because Gordon is a schoolmaster, his author seems to suggest that his conversation would be made up of carefully-formed periods and would employ the vocabulary of a sixth-form essay. But elsewhere in the book Gordon is presented as a man who is quite clearly anything but the pompous pedagogue that this little speech might be parodying, and he speaks an easy local vernacular. It is this uncertainty of tone that impedes total belief in him.

But the occasional weaknesses in the book do not prevent *A Brother's Tale* from being a highly readable and at times very moving novel of a complexity and richness which I have only the space here to hint at. The minor characters are deftly drawn and there are set-pieces of memorable power. I do not think that there can be much doubt that this is Stan Barstow's best novel to date.

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A double life

By Stephen Koss

JAMES HEPBURN:
Arnold Bennett: Sketches for Autobiography
182pp. Allen and Unwin. £7.95.
0 04 928041 4

Enoch Arnold Bennett, as his parents named him, had a dual personality. That, in itself, was not nearly so unusual as the lengths to which it was carried. Enoch, as A. G. Gardiner perceived from years of close friendship, was "the sleeping partner in the concern of which his junior, Mr Arnold Bennett, is the brilliant and spectacular head". Apart from a summer, which he never overcame, Arnold contrived to keep Enoch well in the background. The public figure, willed into existence, obscured the private self. Arnold fulfilled Enoch's dreams by going to Paris, becoming a connoisseur of wines and Russian culture, dabbling in watercolours, and penetrating "the gambling saloons at Monte Carlo". All the while, Enoch stayed at home in the Potteries, content to applaud the clog-dancers on the stage of the Hanbridge Empire (which Arnold transformed into the Grand Theatre of Varieties at Hanley).

Arnold, the *bon vivant*, never wrote a genuine autobiography. To have done so would have been to reveal Enoch, painfully shy and sometimes morbidly introspective. Arnold's journals, assiduously kept *for thirty-four years, described only* "the externals of his life": they chart his travels, catalogue his acquaintances and accomplishments, reckon his financial accounts, but rarely give vent to his emotions. His correspondence, which James Hepburn previously edited in three volumes, was equally reticent. As the front-man of the "concern", he wrote business letters, even to his intimates. Or perhaps Arnold, the persona known to literary and political society, had no real intimates. Confronting death, he expected to live on through his novels, which Virginia Woolf thought rather presumptuous of him. On the contrary, it was small-minded of her.

For all Bloomsbury's sneers, which Arnold forgave—he found the Woolfs "gloomy", but "liked both of them in spite of their naughty treatment of me in the press"—the novels survive as a worthy memorial. "There is only one portrait to be found in all my books — myself", declared the author, who claimed to "have been more an instinct than anything else". A shade too defensively, Hepburn counts nine novels (taking the *Clayhanger* trilogy as a single work) which are considered "in at least certain quarters to be substantial". The best of them, which are very substantial indeed, combine Arnold's artistry with Enoch's sensibility.

Bennett also boasted a vast journalistic output. He first ventured into print as an unpaid contributor to the *Staffordshire Knot*, and later edited *Woman*, an illustrated penny weekly with the motto "Forward but not too fast". He strewed his articles in some of the most out-of-the-way places: *T. P.'s Weekly*, the *Manchester Daily Dispatch*, *Youth's Companion*, *Home and Hearth*, *Black and White*, and the magazine of the Newcastle Middle School, where he had studied as a boy. During the First World War, he became a featured columnist on the *Daily News*, which he left (rejecting the enticement of a larger fee) when Gardiner was evicted from the editorship. Anonymously and without remuneration, he wrote "Observations" for the *New Statesman*. After the war, he published regularly in the *Criterion*, the *Adelphi*, and other highbrow journals, and reached larger audiences through the *Daily Express*, the *Sunday Express*, the *Sunday Pictorial*, and the *Evening Standard*. Trafficking with the popular press did not enhance his reputation among certain snobbish critics. To his credit, however, "he did not elevate his style for the one group, *nor did he condescend to the other*".

His work habits invited scorn and mockery. Having suffered from "the author's empty purse" a chronic condition made vivid in Hepburn's book of that name, he wrote by the clock and normally expected adequate payment for his labours. Driven as much by necessity as by inspiration "to work morning, noon, and night", he was always relieved to finish a work and to part company with his characters. This confession, calculated to "cause annoyance to many who look at novels solely from the consumer's point of view", reinforced the impression that he was "writing for so much a thousand". In any case, there was surely no harm in getting paid for a job well done.

As a subordinate to Lord Beaverbrook at the Ministry of Information, he "learnt that very distinguished authors had been patriotically sending gratis articles to America and having them refused by very distinguished American editors". In response, he wrote "an article stating the British case against Germany, and his priced it at £300. "It was at once bought and printed." His next contribution to the Allied victory brought him £1,200. "The editors were pleased. The British Government was pleased. And so was I. A great moment for the last named", he rejoiced.

These lucrative exercises in wartime propaganda are not among the thirty-five miscellaneous pieces that Professor Hepburn has ferreted out and strung together with interlocking commentaries. His selection, somewhat misleadingly entitled *Sketches for Autobiography*, consists of short articles (and extracts from longer ones) in which Bennett commented on himself, his craft, and his circumstances. The formula works splendidly. In *The Truth About an Author*, published in 1903, Bennett was too self-conscious and perhaps too immature to grapple with "emotional ingenuities", as he called them. He said "nearly all that I cared to say concerning myself from my cradle up to about the time when I left England for France", and that was hardly enough. In subsequent sketches of reflection, he said a good deal more. By assembling these sketches, many of them previously uncollected, Hepburn has achieved what Arnold Bennett himself did not dare. He has roused Enoch from his slumber.

Wisely, the editor allows Bennett to speak in his own words, and what glorious words they are: witty, urbane, and compassionate. Occasionally, he might have obtruded to clarify a point or identify a person mentioned in the text. In 1903, the readers of *T. P.'s Weekly* presumably knew what Bennett meant when he remarked that his "views of patriotism resemble those of Sam Johnson and Grant Allen". Few modern readers will recall Allen, who died in 1899, and fewer still will comprehend the reference to "Sandow exercises". On geological matters, Hepburn is more forthcoming. Bennett traced his descent from James Brindley, a canal engineer, and tersely noted: "Doubt has been cast on his morals." According to Hepburn, Bennett's great-great-grandfather was Brindley's "bastard son".

Details hardly matter. The texture is the important thing, and it is luxuriant. The Wesleyan dogma that Bennett "passively accepted", so often misunderstood by his biographers, is brought into sharp



Arnold Bennett by David Low.

focus. The family background is sensitively etched. Bennett's mother remains a shadowy figure, chiefly notable as a pair of knees at which prayers were to be said. His "ambitious father", who decided to become a tailor at the age of thirty, emerges as a forceful individual. He bullied his children into attending Sunday school and even a Bible class during the Saturday half-holiday, while he "either lay in bed or read magazines in the bow window". A man whose answer to any point of dispute was "Look it up", his "influence was the main factor in making a home in which the 'humanities' flourished more brightly than in any other home of my acquaintance". It was to Arnold's "regret that I should have to lay stress on that part of his training in which he failed".

Bennett's formal education ended when he was sixteen. He remembered his schooldays with fondness, and there is nothing more poignant among these vignettes than his account of a visit, a quarter-century later, from D. B. Hurley, the headmaster of his old school. Bennett was "consuming tea", one of his rituals, when Hurley arrived by bicycle at his house at Fontainebleau.

The sight of him "gave me to think". I naturally thought of his cane, which more than once in its breezy style had chanced to collide somewhat brusquely with the palm of my hand, and I thought of sundry human beings who had faded, or were fading, from my memory.

Assembled in the drawing room were various guests, all cosmopolitans. It remained to be seen whether Hurley was "really equal to his immense local reputation" as a linguist. In fact, "he was more than equal to it. He shone, and I was extremely proud of him".

Longing to "be free of chapels and Sunday schools, and the desolation of Sabbaths", Arnold left home at the age of twenty-one. Or, in his own words, he "quitted the romance of the Potteries for the prose of London". The metropolis was a lonely place for a "raw provincial", who found comfort in books. Later on, he was to "review three or four hundred books annually", but he never appreciated them more than in those early days, when they were his companions. With "luck and skill", a young man could then stretch an allowance of £4 a year to buy fifty—perhaps even seventy-five—titles. He patronized the bookstalls in Charing Cross Road and the bookbarrows in Farringdon Road, Aldgate, and Shoreditch. Discards from the circulating library of W. H. Smith and Son were "superior to those of Messrs Mudie, because *the latter paste their label on the outside of the book*".

In 1903, he satisfied his "desire for Fence", where he lived for a decade and married unhappily. "I can now see that there has been a French thread through my life", he wrote in the *Strand Magazine* upon his return. "Of its origin I can form no idea, for neither my forebears nor the friends of my youth displayed *the slightest interest in France or the French.*" Unlike V. S. Pritchett, he had had no French neighbour to fascinate and tease him. As a young man, working in his father's law office, he had brought French novels—necessarily in translation—and a daily French newspaper from a shop in Coventry Street. "My inward vision of Paris was romantic, based on the belief that Paris was essentially 'different'". Settled there, he observed the homelines of women's dresses, purchased Empire furniture, and savoured a cuisine better than that of London, "a city which has more inefficient restaurants to the square mile than any other city east of New York and west of Vladivostock". The people in the streets had none of "the harsh and awkward timidity, the self-centred egotism and aristocratic hypocrisy of Piccadilly", and it somehow "seemed difficult to be lonely amid multitudes that so candidly accepted human nature as human nature is".

Yet the constancy of England was no less appealing in its way. Late in 1907, he returned on a three-month visit:

> When one comes back to it, after long absence, one sees exactly *the same* starling, cold white cliffs under the same stars. Ministries may have fallen; the salaries of music-hall artistes may have risen; Christmas boxes may have become a crime; old-age pensions and war balloons may be in the air; Home Rule may be underground; the strange notion may have sprouted that schoolchildren must be fed before they are taught; but all *these* things are as nothing compared to the changeless fact of the island itself.

In 1913, weary of exile, he definitely quitted the land where eating and love are understood, where art and learning are honoured, where women well dressed and without illusions are not rare, where thrift flourishes, where politeness is practised, and where *politics are shameful* and grotesque. . . . I should probably have enjoyed myself more in France, only I prefer to live in England and regret France than to live in France and regret England.

The romance of Paris is legendary. Less so the romance of the Potteries, which Bennett superbly captured in *Anna of the Five Towns*. "Nothing could be *more* prosaic than the aspect of the huddled streets, nothing more seemingly remote from romance", he conceded. "Yet romance dwells even here, though unsuspected by its very makers—the romance which always attends the alchemic processes of skilled, transmuting labour."

He himself had "never felt any curiosity concerning the great staple industry—surely the oldest of man's crafts—until I was twenty-six or thirty, when I wanted some information about it for a novel". At that point, he suddenly became aware "that clay is a living thing, and therefore enigmatic". Through art, he discovered beauty: "From red and hill you may see on every side furnace calling to furnace with fiery tongues and wreathing messages of smoke across the blue-red glow of acres of burning ironstone. The unique pyrotechnics of labour stirring for its grime!"

Virginia Woolf fancifully depicted the process of industrialization as the gathering of a black cloud over London, but Bennett knew that "great changes do not happen suddenly". In a moving tribute to "the people of the Potteries", written for *Cassell's Magazine* in 1911, he condemned the attitude of disgust and blame which is so foolishly characteristic of the people who come from an agricultural or a bureaucratic community into an industrial one. Ruskin gorgeously inveighed against the spectacular horrors of industrialism. But he would probably have been very cross if he had had to drink his tea out of *the hollow of his hand*, in default of a cup and to keep himself warm with a skipping-rope, in default of coal. Yet neither cups nor coals can be produced without a great deal of dirt.

It was to Bennett's credit that he neither ignored nor condoned the dirt, but recognized that human dignity could transcend it.

He has often been described—and fashionably *discounted*—as a "realistic novelist", as if to imply that he lacked true creative powers. Realism obviously informed his art, but did not constrain it. "Art is not imagine how the fumes, noise and encumbrance of the motor-car would soon lead them to regret such rural inconveniences.

The professor was young but already famous. His book on *La Carne, la Morte e il Diavolo nella letteratura romantica* (in English, *The Romantic Agony*) had placed him foremost among the scholars of late nineteenth and early twentieth-century literature. His studies on Donne and Crashaw, on Machiavelli and the Elizabethans, on Byron, and on T. S. Eliot had won him the Chair of English at the University of Rome and a reputation as the best English scholar in Italy. He had already spent several years in *England, teaching* Italian at the universities of Liverpool and Manchester. His articles on contemporary Italian literature, which had appeared in *The London Mercury*, *The Criterion* and *The Modern Language Review*, had contributed very largely to make D'Annunzio better known to the English and to introduce them to Montale and Svevo.

Professor Praz lived for thirty-five years in the Palazzo Ricci, and they were years of prodigious activity. Simultaneously with setting up the best school of English studies in Italy (and one of the best in the world) he continued his work on English literature with an impressive series of books soon to become indispensable to the English scholar (*A History of English Literature*, *Studies in Seventeenth Century Imagery*, *The Hero in Eclipse in Victorian Fiction*, *Anglo-Saxon Literary Chronicles*) and a no less impressive series of translations (from Shakespeare, Jane Austen, Charles Lamb, Eliot). On a less academic but no less serious plane he was an indefatigable literary journalist, producing articles and book-reviews at an astonishing rate. The fountain in the courtyard of the Palazzo might well run dirty from time to time, but the ink from the professor's pen never stopped flowing. No important book on English or American literature has appeared in the past fifty years without being reviewed and discussed by this tireless critic. The bibliography of his writings drawn up by M. and V. Gabrieli in 1976 lists 2,322 items. And even now, at the age of 83, Praz still contributes four articles a month to *Il tempo* and *Il giornale nuovo*.

Already in *The Romantic Agony* he had shown his interest in the fine arts, and after he settled in Rome that interest grew stronger; he was soon to be recognised as a distinguished art-critic, and as a connoisseur and scholar of Neo-classical art. Since 1938, when he wrote an essay on "Milton and Poussin", he has given much of his talent to the exploration of the relations between literature and the visual arts. The great comparatist, whose astonishing knowledge of the main European languages (including Russian) and literatures had left such a deep mark on the study of symbolism and the decadents developed into a super-comparatist of the arts. Just as *The Romantic Agony* is the necessary key to any understanding of *fin-de-siècle* sensibility, so his *Gusto neoclassico* is a key to the understanding of Winckelmann and Canova, and *Mnemosyne* an extremely enjoyable "parallel" between literature and the visual arts; while *Il giardino dei Varia*, a collection of essays on Mannerism and the Baroque, should be prescribed reading for students of sixteenth and seventeenth-century art. Passing with superb ease from literature to painting, sculpture and architecture, Praz examines with equal attention and penetration the strange apparitions of Hieronymus Bosch and the "deliquescent Latinity" of Francesco Colonna (whom he calls "a Joyce of the fifteenth century"); the amorous heroes of Tasso and the fat women of Rubens; the Dantesque elements in Sir Thomas Browne and the theatricality of Bernini.

In making his comparisons Praz is frequently led to contrast the art of today with that of the past, much to the advantage of the latter. His essay on Rubens, for example, ends with an attack on Lucio Fontana. His tendency to disparage contemporary art has become more marked in recent years, culminating in 1979 with *Perseo e la Medusa*, a collection of essays on artists from Romanticism to the avant-garde. For Praz, Perseus is the symbol of immortal Art, which in the end must triumph over Antiart, i.e. the false image of art prevailing in our own century, and especially abstract art. Protected by the shield of Perseus, Praz fights his battles with such renowned artcritics as Argan, Brandi and Dorfles, and does not spare the artists whom both the intellectual critics, with their sophisticated theories, and the more pragmatic art dealers have long canonized. Fontana, Burri, Doeraiio, Rauzlier, Pollock, Mark Rothko and many others are the butt of his devastating sarcasm, and in attacking such established personalities Praz shows no little courage and independence of judgement. One would have thought that his attacks would have been met with equally devastating rebuttals, but evidently the Grand Old Man's authority commands an unusual measure of respect.

Much less controversial is the other topic which Praz has explored in recent years, that is Rome itself. Although he was born in the eternal city he was brought up in Florence, and whenever he mentions Florence and Tuscany he shows that fond nostalgia which usually goes with the memory of a first love. But how could a man living in the Palazzo Ricci, via Giulia, escape the fascination of Rome? And Rome with its palaces, its piazze, its churches and streets and customs, has been the subject of some of his most enjoyable essays—which were brought together in two volumes published under the title of *Panopticon romano* in 1967 and 1977.

But if Praz has left his imprint on many Roman sites, there is one with which he will be forever associated, the Palazzo Ricci; and a visit to this palace is a conducted tour that everyone can make, by reading what is surely his masterpiece, *La casa della vita*. Great books sometimes have a curious origin, and when Mario Praz's stepfather presented him, as a boy still in his teens, with an Empire chest-of-drawers, he certainly could not have imagined that he was starting something momentous: a lifelong interest in furniture, a passion for the Empire style, the adventures of collecting and the innumerable visits to art-dealers, museums and galleries that were to culminate in the marvellous collection at the Palazzo Ricci and its description in *La casa della vita* (along with several articles and a whole book on *La filosofia dell'arredamento*, or in English, *An Illustrated History of Interior Decoration*).

La casa della vita (The House of Life) is in fact a description of the apartment in which Praz lived from 1934 to 1968 and of its contents: furniture, paintings, sculptures, carpets and *objets d'art*. The book was first published in 1958 and now that its author is living in a different house, a new edition has appeared, with the addition of three final chapters: a farewell to the via Giulia, displaying a profound nostalgia for its former quasi-rural character; a description of Praz's new house; and a concluding essay under the title of "Twenty years on". Many illustrations of the new house have also been added to the earlier ones of the Palazzo Ricci.

The new house is the Palazzo Primoli, the seat of the Museo Napoleonico. As Chairman of the Foundation which runs the Museum and on the proviso that he will bequeath his library to the Foundation, Praz was allowed to occupy several rooms above the Museum itself: *no better setting could be* imagined for his Empire collection. But it is strange how the fate of being the prisoner of the English should still haunt Napoleon in Rome: fifty years ago the chairman of the Foundation was a translator of Shakespeare, Diego Angeli, and *now it is the supreme Italian* master of English studies!

Other memories too, are associated with Palazzo Primoli. A fundamental chapter in *La Carne, la Morte e il Diavolo*, together with a large section of *Il patto col serpente*, which is a sort of appendix to the earlier book, are devoted to D'Annunzio, and it is most appropriate that the eminent critic should now be living in the very palace where D'Annunzio used to play the lion at Count Primoli's parties. But Praz takes more pride in the fact that next door to the Palazzo is the Locanda dell'Orso, the ancient inn where Montaigne took his lodgings in 1580; for Montaigne was the father of the modern essay, a genre which is Praz's own speciality.

The quality which makes his essays so enjoyable is that the *erudite professor never forgets that* his readers must also be entertained. One of his first collections of articles to be published was called *Studi e svaghi inglesi*. Now *svagare* is one of those Italian words hard to translate, but *to amuse* or, better, *to entertain* is not far from its true meaning, and entertainment seems to be the supreme result of good writing. Any professor can teach but only a writer can entertain.

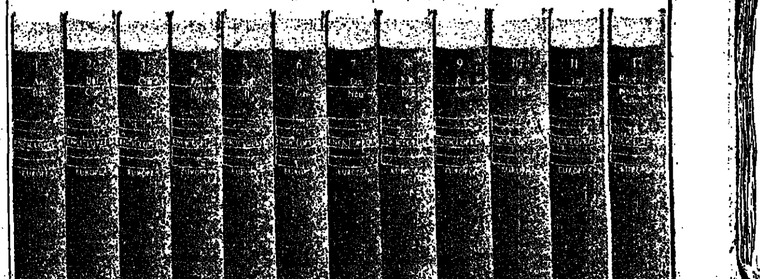
To entertain his readers with a description of furniture and interior decoration was no easy task, but Praz was wonderfully successful (*pace* Cyril Connolly, who called *The House of Life* "one of the dullest books I have ever read"). For the description of his beloved possessions is the starting-point for a process of reminiscence, and the story of a particular desk, a chest-of-drawers, a picture, or a *bibelot*, is connected with the people who used or loved or recommended or sold these objects, and with the circumstances for their acquisition, their removal and their present arrangement. So *The House of Life* is far more than a glorified *voyage autour de ma chambre* or illustration of the charms of the Empire style; it is a sort of fragmentary autobiography and a collection of portraits of Praz's friends and acquaintances, with here and there a brief critical essay thrown in. Memories of England are frequent, of course, and the portraits of English personalities (Bellnc, Bridges, Gosse, Musefield, Maurice Baring, Vernon Lee and the Pre-Raphaelite beauty, Mrs Stillman, among others), the evocation of English landscapes and cities, and of characteristic events such as a meeting of William Morris devotees at the Hampshire Club in the early 1920s, should have entertained even Cyril Connolly.

The gallery of famous people whom Praz met and whom he exhibits in the book includes Charles Du Bos, Romain Rolland, Benedetto Croce, Edmund Wilson and many others, and what he has to say about them is naturally very interesting. But more vivid and touching are the figures who were closer to his intimate life, his relatives and friends of his early youth, and especially the women whom he loved or courted, or who attracted him or whose behaviour particularly struck him, such as the chambermaid he once surprised in the act of kissing his marble Apollo. For the lover of furniture and of inanimate things has never been insensitive to feminine beauty or invulnerable to its effects.

The final paragraph in this new edition of *La casa della vita*, indeed, seems to disclose a feeling of regret for a life spent in study rather than in love. But for a man with Mario Praz's sense of humour any display of self-pity is impossible: irony steps in immediately and the book ends on a lighter note. So the reader can himself dismiss any incipient sadness and hope instead for more entertainment in the future from the same author.

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The prodigy of the Palazzo Ricci

By Filippo Donini

MARIO PRAZ:
La casa della vita
450pp. Milan: Adelphi. L40,000.

When, in 1934, as a young professor who had just moved from Manchester to Rome, Mario Praz rented a flat in the Palazzo Ricci, the via Giulia in which it stood was still one of the quietest streets in the old centre of the town. What Annibal Caro had called "the most beautiful street in Rome" had not yet been invaded by that scourge of historic cities, the motor-car. The only vehicles to be seen in Piazza Ricci were *the horse-drawn carts* bringing vegetables to a nearby shop; the tenants used to complain of the smell and the flies but could not imagine how the fumes, noise and encumbrance of the motor-car would soon lead them to regret such rural inconveniences.

The professor was young but already famous. His book on *La Carne, la Morte e il Diavolo nella letteratura romantica* (in English, *The Romantic Agony*) had placed him foremost among the scholars of late nineteenth and early twentieth-century literature. His studies on Donne and Crashaw, on Machiavelli and the Elizabethans, on Byron, and on T. S. Eliot had won him the Chair of English at the University of Rome and a reputation as the best English scholar in Italy. He had already spent several years in *England, teaching* Italian at the universities of Liverpool and Manchester. His articles on contemporary Italian literature, which had appeared in *The London Mercury*, *The Criterion* and *The Modern Language Review*, had contributed very largely to make D'Annunzio better known to the English and to introduce them to Montale and Svevo.

Professor Praz lived for thirty-five years in the Palazzo Ricci, and they were years of prodigious activity. Simultaneously with setting up the best school of English studies in Italy (and one of the best in the world) he continued his work on English literature with an impressive series of books soon to become indispensable to the English scholar (*A History of English Literature*, *Studies in Seventeenth Century Imagery*, *The Hero in Eclipse in Victorian Fiction*, *Anglo-Saxon Literary Chronicles*) and a no less impressive series of translations (from Shakespeare, Jane Austen, Charles Lamb, Eliot). On a less academic but no less serious plane he was an indefatigable literary journalist, producing articles and book-reviews at an astonishing rate. The fountain in the courtyard of the Palazzo might well run dirty from time to time, but the ink from the professor's pen never stopped flowing. No important book on English or American literature has appeared in the past fifty years without being reviewed and discussed by this tireless critic. The bibliography of his writings drawn up by M. and V. Gabrieli in 1976 lists 2,322 items. And even now, at the age of 83, Praz still contributes four articles a month to *Il tempo* and *Il giornale nuovo*.

Already in *The Romantic Agony* he had shown his interest in the fine arts, and after he settled in Rome that interest grew stronger; he was soon to be recognised as a distinguished art-critic, and as a connoisseur and scholar of Neo-classical art. Since 1938, when he wrote an essay on "Milton and Poussin", he has given much of his talent to the exploration of the relations between literature and the visual arts. The great comparatist, whose astonishing knowledge of the main European languages (including Russian) and literatures had left such a deep mark on the study of symbolism and the decadents developed into a super-comparatist of the arts. Just as *The Romantic Agony* is the necessary key to any understanding of *fin-de-siècle* sensibility, so his *Gusto neoclassico* is a key to the understanding of Winckelmann and Canova, and *Mnemosyne* an extremely enjoyable "parallel" between literature and the visual arts; while *Il giardino dei Varia*, a collection of essays on Mannerism and the Baroque, should be prescribed reading for students of sixteenth and seventeenth-century art. Passing with superb ease from literature to painting, sculpture and architecture, Praz examines with equal attention and penetration the strange apparitions of Hieronymus Bosch and the "deliquescent Latinity" of Francesco Colonna (whom he calls "a Joyce of the fifteenth century"); the amorous heroes of Tasso and the fat women of Rubens; the Dantesque elements in Sir Thomas Browne and the theatricality of Bernini.

In making his comparisons Praz is frequently led to contrast the art of today with that of the past, much to the advantage of the latter. His essay on Rubens, for example, ends with an attack on Lucio Fontana. His tendency to disparage contemporary art has become more marked in recent years, culminating in 1979 with *Perseo e la Medusa*, a collection of essays on artists from Romanticism to the avant-garde. For Praz, Perseus is the symbol of immortal Art, which in the end must triumph over Antiart, i.e. the false image of art prevailing in our own century, and especially abstract art. Protected by the shield of Perseus, Praz fights his battles with such renowned art critics as Argan, Brandi and Dorfles, and does not spare the artists whom both the intellectual critics, with their sophisticated theories, and the more pragmatic art dealers have long canonized. Fontana, Burri, Doeraiio, Rauzlier, Pollock, Mark Rothko and many others are the butt of his devastating sarcasm, and in attacking such established personalities Praz shows no little courage and independence of judgement. One would have thought that his attacks would have been met with equally devastating rebuttals, but evidently the Grand Old Man's authority commands an unusual measure of respect.

Much less controversial is the other topic which Praz has explored in recent years, that is Rome itself. Although he was born in the eternal city he was brought up in Florence, and whenever he mentions Florence and Tuscany he shows that fond nostalgia which usually goes with the memory of a first love. But how could a man living in the Palazzo Ricci, via Giulia, escape the fascination of Rome? And Rome with its palaces, its piazze, its churches and streets and customs, has been the subject of some of his most enjoyable essays—which were brought together in two volumes published under the title of *Panopticon romano* in 1967 and 1977.

But if Praz has left his imprint on many Roman sites, there is one with which he will be forever associated, the Palazzo Ricci; and a visit to this palace is a conducted tour that everyone can make, by reading what is surely his masterpiece, *La casa della vita*. Great books sometimes have a curious origin, and when Mario Praz's stepfather presented him, as a boy still in his teens, with an Empire chest-of-drawers, he certainly could not have imagined that he was starting something momentous: a lifelong interest in furniture, a passion for the Empire style, the adventures of collecting and the innumerable visits to art-dealers, museums and galleries that were to culminate in the marvellous collection at the Palazzo Ricci and its description in *La casa della vita* (along with several articles and a whole book on *La filosofia dell'arredamento*, or in English, *An Illustrated History of Interior Decoration*).

La casa della vita (The House of Life) is in fact a description of the apartment in which Praz lived from 1934 to 1968 and of its contents: furniture, paintings, sculptures, carpets and *objets d'art*. The book was first published in 1958 and now that its author is living in a different house, a new edition has appeared, with the addition of three final chapters: a farewell to the via Giulia, displaying a profound nostalgia for its former quasi-rural character; a description of Praz's new house; and a concluding essay under the title of "Twenty years on". Many illustrations of the new house have also been added to the earlier ones of the Palazzo Ricci.

The new house is the Palazzo Primoli, the seat of the Museo Napoleonico. As Chairman of the Foundation which runs the Museum and on the proviso that he will bequeath his library to the Foundation, Praz was allowed to occupy several rooms above the Museum itself: *no better setting could be*

The spirit of contradiction

By Patrick McCarthy

LEONARDO SCIASCIA:
Dalle parti degli infedeli
87pp. Palermo: Sellerio. L2,500.

Nero su nero
247pp. Turin: Einaudi. L4,000

La Sicilia come metafora
Intervista di Marcello Padovani
133pp. Milan: Mondadori. L4,000.

Leonardo Sciascia
L'Arc No 77
84pp. Paris: CDE-Sodis.

During recent years the controversies which have always surrounded Leonardo Sciascia have changed. He has been attacked by the Italian left, especially by the Communists, who had previously considered him an ally. During the kidnapping of Aldo Moro they took a tough line and opposed negotiations with the Red Brigades, while Sciascia denounced their authoritarianism. He then coined the phrase "left-wing idiots" to deride the supporters of the historic compromise, who in turn attacked his "qualunquismo".

These three, characteristically short books, and the special number of the French review *L'Arc*, offer a good insight into the Sciascia of the late 1970s. *Dalle parti degli infedeli* is the simplest of the three because it represents another battle in Sciascia's long war against the Democrazia Cristiana. A Sicilian bishop, Monsignor Ficarra, was driven into retirement by the Vatican because the DC kept losing elections in his diocese. In publishing the Vatican's letters to the bishop, and in his commentary on them, Sciascia takes us back to the early post-war period.

The tale begins in 1947, one year before the election in which the DC defeated the left and began its thirty years of power. On voting-day Sicilian priests told their parishioners to vote DC because in the polling booth "God can see you but Stalin can't". Since Monsignor Ficarra believed that God had better things to do than spy on voters, the Vatican began its long, cunning campaign to oust him.

Sciascia has never changed his view of the DC. In *A ciascuno il suo* (1965) the murderer, Rosello, is a DC politician, who uses the Vatican newspaper *Osservatore Romano* to execute his crime. For Sciascia the DC is the latest in the succession of plagues that have devastated Sicily. Itself following Mussolini, it looks back to the Inquisition and the Bourbons, and has embraced the Mafia. Of course, it is only one sign of an evil that goes deeper than politics. In Sciascia's Sicily the family is another force for violence: Rosello is driven by an incestuous love for his cousin. In *Candido* (1977) the hero has to be abandoned by his mother and to slay his father before he can become a thinking human being. The roots of evil go deep into Sicilian soil. "There is a touch of Fascism in all of us", says another of Sciascia's characters; the battle against it is a battle against the devil.

Sciascia's chief weapon is reason, which he analyses in *La Sicilia come metafora*, a book of conversations with Marcelle Padovani, who herself writes well about Italy for the *Nouvel Observateur*. It is "a reason that hovers on the brink of unreason". The roots of evil go so deep that guile and passion are needed to destroy them; falsehood is so pervasive that scepticism is an effort of imagination as well as an act of defiance against Sicily's many Rosellos. Courage and honesty, intuition and fantasy are Sciascia's other weapons.

The capital of reason is the anti-Palermo, Paris, where Sciascia now spends much of his time. Steeped in French culture, he is at his most Sicilian when he writes about it. He gives unstinting praise to the French Revolution, whereas French intellectuals brood on the Terror and on Jacobin centralization. But they have not lived in Sicily, which, according to Sciascia, has never known change and has always been decadent. If he regrets that the revolutionary and Napoleonic armies never reached Palermo, it is because they might have left in their wake numerous Fabrice del Dongos to join him in his war against the DC. Conversely he notes that French intellectuals from Stendhal on have admired in Italy precisely what he dislikes. What they call spontaneity comes from centuries of ignorance.

In *Nero su nero*, a diary which comments on the books he has been reading, Sciascia reconstructs French literature. He does not mention Taine and Renan, the prophets of dogmatic rationalism, but turns instead to the more subtle, pessimistic line of moral thinkers which runs from Montaigne to La Bruyère. La Rochefoucauld's sense that every good trait hides a deeper selfishness, that every solid characteristic dissolves into nothingness, is a guide to Sciascia's Sicily. Next he looks to Voltaire and Diderot, who pitted intelligence against oppression. And from Diderot it is an easy leap to Stendhal, in whose novels analysis, instead of following emotion, shapes it. Reason lives and breathes in Fabrice's monologues in *La Chartreuse de Parme*, as it does in Sciascia's diaries.

His dispute with the Partito Comunista Italiano has more to do with reason than with politics, and may be less new than it seems. He has left a humorous, human picture of a PCI militant in *La Morte di Stalin* (1960) but in *A ciascuno il suo* Rosello is to be the architect of a DC-PCI alliance, which may be read as a prophetic condemnation of the "historic compromise". In 1975 Sciascia agreed to stand for the Palermo city council on the communist list, although he did not join the party. In less than two years he resigned, outraged because the council members, summoned to meet at 8 pm, did not turn up until midnight. The PCI contingent continued to compromise with the DC rather than conduct a serious opposition.

In 1978 came the dispute about Aldo Moro. Sciascia could scarcely believe that the DC, which had turned corruption into a method of government, should refuse to negotiate with the Red Brigades because that would weaken the Italian state. Moreover the DC invented the legend of a Moro who had been a statesman and would have opposed negotiations. In *L'affare Moro* Sciascia exposed the falsity of this legend: Moro had never been a statesman but had exemplified the byzantine politics of Southern Italy. The DC was playing its old game: it was weak with the strong—the Red Brigades—and strong with the weak—the designated if reluctant martyr, Moro.

In supporting the refusal to negotiate, the PCI was demonstrating that it had joined the masters. Rhetoric about the sense of the state masked an Inquisition—or Mafia-style—authoritarianism. Not surprisingly *L'affare Moro* was attacked by the newspaper *La Repubblica*, run by left-wingers who are not themselves communists but who favour a communist presence in the government and who hope, precisely, that the PCI can revitalize the Italian state. On the issue of negotiations it is hard to disagree with *La Repubblica*. If it had compromised with the Red Brigades, the government would have perpetuated the decadence which Sciascia excoriates. Yet he is not alone in feeling that the PCI has become too much a party of order. Lured by the mirage of an alliance with the DC, it has not tried hard enough to reform Italian society. It has lost support among intellectuals as well as among voters, and Sciascia's dispute with *La Repubblica* is part of a wider debate.

His break with the PCI is a characteristic act of rebellion—the reverse of "qualunquismo"—and it springs from his belief in reason. In *La Sicilia come metafora* he attacks the PCI's incoherence. It is neither a Moscow-style communist party nor a labour party. Its secretary, Enrico Berlinguer, might reply that politics is a matter of straddling opposites; the "philosophe" Sciascia would not agree.

The Aix-en-Provence review, *L'Arc*, chose the right moment to bring out its number on Sciascia. It contains an article by Pasolini and letters to Sciascia from Italo Calvino. Dominique Fernandez, Philippe Renard and Claude Ambroise, whom Sciascia considers the best critic of his work, have all contributed pieces. A common theme runs through it: that Sciascia's writing is a defence of the embattled individual consciousness against all oppressions, not merely political ones. Sciascia's refusal to believe the lies spun by the DC or the PCI has a metaphysical aspect. It is an affirmation of man's existence: I refuse to believe, therefore I am.

The metaphysical dimension is all the more intriguing because of a comment made in *Nero su nero* about Graham Greene. An admirer of Greene's story-telling ability, Sciascia dislikes *The Human Factor*, which he calls "a valley full of mists and thick with brambles"; Greene should not have written such a "suffocating" book. The remarks takes us back to *A ciascuno il suo*, in which the amateur detective Laurana, who also admires Greene, talks of "unregenerate catholic romanticism". Like Scobie in *The Heart of the Matter*, Laurana is then drawn into the mystery he is supposed to investigate. But, unlike Greene, Sciascia never suggests that sexual love contains good, or that his hero might come to God via evil. Laurana's lust destroys him.

Yet Sciascia's own values take on a metaphysical, or even a religious sense in *Dalle parti degli infedeli*, where the defiant Monsignor Ficarra is martyred by the Vatican. The supreme martyr is Moro, murdered before he dies by his friends, who bury him beneath the legend of the great statesman and ignore his letters. Yet these epistles were Moro's attempt to save himself from death. Abandoned by the DC and exploited by the PCI, he was transformed in his prison from scheming politician into courageous human being. Against the violence of the Red Brigades, he pits guile and language. To think, says Sciascia, is to think about death and Moro kept death at bay by writing. If religion is the attempt to make sense of things, then Sciascia is correct in calling *L'affare Moro* a religious book.

Writing itself remains Sciascia's greatest concern. In *La Sicilia come metafora* he notes that to the Sicilian peasant words were a trap because they were the weapon of the cheating landowner. Literature is caught up with falsehood and yet, it leads by suitably circuitous route to truth. The device of the anonymous letter drawn from *Osservatore romano* was used by Sciascia in a novel before the DC used it against Monsignor Ficarra. Only literature, which can juxtapose seeming and being, can embrace the mystery of Sicily. Clearly this is no kind of truth that Taine would have understood, but Sciascia reminds us that the Arabs, tellers of magical tales, occupied Sicily for centuries. Perhaps there is a touch of the Arab in Sciascia himself.

Another grievance held against him in Italy is that he writes too much. Yet these books do not provide a complete picture of Sciascia in the late 1970s; there is more to come. In the 1979 elections he stood for parliament as a Radical. The Radicals are a mixed brew but they do contain that ingredient of pure opposition which Sciascia incarnates. Yet they may have as much trouble with him as the PCI did. He says that his epitaph should be: "a contradictor who contradicts himself". In *Nero su nero* he calls Stendhal an "unfinished" writer and the same is true of Sciascia. He writes only in the summer, and in a couple of months' time he will be at his desk in the Sicilian village of Racalmuto, the Regalpetra of his books.

The professional Mafia

By Martin Clark

PIER PAOLO GIGLIOLI:
Baroni e burocrati
Il Ceto accademico italiano
232pp. Bologna: Il Mulino. L8,000.

Italian universities have a bad name. In the late 1960s they were thrown open to the masses: student numbers rose from a quarter of a million in 1960 to over one million today, a third of the age-group. Libraries and laboratories became hopelessly overcrowded, professional training became minimal, degrees became valueless. The universities were centres of Marcusian militancy rather than of learning; hirsute, slogan-shouting enragés held the stage, defying the the academic Establishment and battling ritually with the police.

Nowadays things are more serious. The universities appear to many Italians as breeding-grounds for terrorists. When Aldo Moro was kidnapped, he was on his way to lecture at Rome University; when Vittorio Bachelet was shot, it was outside his Rome lecture-hall; when Antonio Negri was arrested as an alleged Red Brigader, he was a professor at Padua. It is not surprising if eminent academics seek refuge abroad, or if younger scholars seek posts in libraries and archives rather than in the firing-line.

Pier Paolo Giglioli's book surveys this dismal scene, concentrating on the professors and on the reasons for their weakness. His basic thesis is that since Unification the university system has always been and still is, far too centralized and far too uniform. Even in the good old days, before the 1960s, all universities taught much the same courses in much the same way. Professors were appointed by the Minister of Education, after a national competition. New courses could only be introduced after ministerial approval. There was only one degree, the *laurea*.

But, as so often in Italy, formal centralization concealed the reality of local power and patronage. Since there were no graduate schools, an aspiring academic had to serve a long "apprenticeship" as assistant to an established professor. If he behaved himself, the professor could usually wangle him a research job, publish his work (often in the professor's own journal) and eventually, given luck and connexions in the Ministry, could "place" him in a Chair in some remote backwater. The assistant was, therefore, totally dependent on his master—for sixteen years, on average, from *laurea* to Chair. Nobody who has seen Italian junior staff at work at academic conferences—fetching glasses of water, helping professors on with their coats, carrying briefcases and ringing for taxis—will quarrel with Giglioli's argument here; and one may share, too, his sympathy with the "orphans", whose professors let them down by dying too soon. But even "successful" neo-professors remained dependent, unless they wanted to spend the rest of their lives teaching at Sassari or Macerata. Most of them felt a strong centripetal urge, or Roming instinct, which kept them moving up the university hierarchy, and kept them tied to their bosses.

But why was this traditional centralized system fragile? Because, says Giglioli, it rested on the professors—the "barons"—being able to find research posts and Chairs for their retainers. They could only do so by influencing the national research committees and appointments boards, and that meant forming nation-wide alliances (Giglioli calls them "schools", but the Mafia term "families" might be more appropriate). That, in turn, inhibited the growth of any "scientific communities" or "invisible colleges", with their own pecking orders and reward-systems. Fine research work provided no benefits, not even greater prestige; certainly no bright independent mind would ever be appointed to a Chair. So mediocrity prevailed. But the real trouble in Italy was not, or not only, the nepotism, the old-boy network or the political intrigue—these are found in universities everywhere—but the fact that they all operated at national level and were therefore too visible. A system in which marrying the boss's daughter won you a Chair of Surgery was bound to be questionable; but when the Minister of Education had to make the appointment, it became vulnerable.

In any case, the traditional system could not cope with the student population explosion. More students meant more assistants, and it also meant that assistants had to do much more of the actual teaching. More assistants meant less chance of "placing" them in Chairs, even though several thousand new ones were hastily created in 1973. So the assistants—who are, notes Giglioli, of a lower social class than hitherto—have joined unions and agitated for *collective* promotion (on seniority rather than on merit). Some of them have succeeded in gaining established posts as "incaricati", but many have not. There are still 10,000 assistants of various kinds, clamouring for jobs. Professors are faced not only by hostile students but by thousands of desperate "precari", often aged well over thirty, ill-trained in academic research and unfit for any useful outside employment.

Thus professorial power, based as it was on patronage, has collapsed. However, Giglioli has little sympathy for the old barons. He portrays them as egoistic monsters, hardly ever at their posts, barely interested in research, spending most of their time on consultancy work or, at best, on academic politicking. A Chair, in Italy, has not been something in which to recline, fortified by Plato and old port; it has been more like a trampoline, from which to launch oneself into the world of business and politics. Professors in the smaller centres tend to live in Rome or Milan, visiting their universities once a week at most; professors in the larger centres have the best outside opportunities. Now the years of neglect have caught up with the professors, and serve them right.

Much of the book describes the attitudes of the beleaguered professoriat, as surveyed in 1972. Like academics elsewhere, they tend to the left in politics; they are also irreligious, or at least less religious than the general public. The university atmosphere, remarks Giglioli, appears to erode conservative beliefs. Elevation to a Chair seems, curiously enough, to make little difference to political outlook. Teachers in the "professional" faculties (eg, Medicine, Veterinary Medicine, Pharmacy, Agriculture) are less left-wing than their colleagues in the Arts or Pure Sciences, presumably because of their greater extra-mural activities. This group is also more in favour of reintroducing limits on student entrance, but much less keen on having to work full time than are the "non-professional" teachers. No surprises here. One question Giglioli did not ask, regrettably, is what the professors thought of the appointments system.

What happens next? It is a fair bet that the assistants will have to be given jobs. A bill currently going through Parliament provides that 15,000 Chairs and 15,000 new "Associate Professorships" are to be made available by 1999, together with 16,000 research posts. But how will these jobs be distributed, given the loosening of the old "school" ties, and the absence of any "scientific communities" to assess merit? At this point Giglioli's nerve fails him. He hints, delicately, that party political alignments "may, in the long run, be reflected even in exclusively academic areas, for example, the appointment of teachers". Even today, alas, "occasional voices are raised to denounce such goings-on. This seems to me far too mealy-mouthed. Giglioli's whole argument about professorial power has led precisely to this unwelcome conclusion; and, after all, distributing jobs among party followers is not exactly unknown in Italy.

If Giglioli had probed a little here, he would no doubt have been inundated with spicy anecdotes, some of which might even have been publishable. But that is not his way. At one point, it is true, he quotes a splendid nineteenth-century description of *liberi docenti* touting for custom as students arrive at Naples railway station; but he tells no comparable stories about their modern successors. This is, considering its subject, an austere book: a serious, intelligent, well-documented, sociological study, full of ideal-type models, statistical tables and attitude surveys. It is not a vivid, gossipy account of academic scandals, nor is it a witty *Microcosmographia*. Some frivolous readers may regret this, but even they will find much of interest in Giglioli's pages.

The Anglo-Irish in retreat

By Roy Foster

W. J. McCORMACK:
Sheridan Le Fanu and Victorian Ireland
310pp. Oxford University Press. £12.50.
0 19 8126 29 8

What is the nature of the connection between Irish Protestantism and the supernatural? Everyone concerned with the absorbing world of Anglo-Ireland in the nineteenth century, its threatened values and uncertain fears, must sooner or later confront the question. Superstition is allegedly a traditional weakness of Irish Protestants and their literature abounds in hauntings, yet the traditions of the Church of Ireland are doggedly literal, akin to the Lowest Anglicanism, barely touched even by a modest revival of ritualism. Possibly the reasons for the obsession were chiefly sociological, a symptom of present alienation and a guilty past: added to the conditioning effect of being surrounded by Catholicism, traditionally not only in thrall to the Pope of Rome but in league with the dark temporal powers of continental Europe. It is not part of Dr McCormack's brief in his challenging new book to confront this question; however, he reminds us, in another context, that "in Anglo-Irish experience, religious imagery was at all times explicitly political . . . it is therefore inevitable that Anglo-Irish literature should exploit religious imagery with an explicit and literal intensity unparalleled in Britain". And so it does.

But the way in which Catholicism and supernaturalism are intertwined in the Anglo-Irish imagination requires analysis; for it is an ambivalent vision, in keeping with that most ambivalent of polities. One must consider, not only the terrifying Spanish Jesuits in *Melmoth*, but the fact that Van Helsing, the caster-out of devils in *Dracula*, is a continental Catholic. And, chronologically placed between these two quintessential Irish Protestant tales of dread, there rises the shade of Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu. Neither Maturin nor Stoker is mentioned in Dr McCormack's book, nor is it his business to do so; but their ghosts are never far. The opening chapters of *Melmoth* recall a Le Fanu journey, and Stoker's undead are obviously descended from Le Fanu's vampire Carmilla; moreover, tradition has it that it was the naturally preserved corpses in the embalming crypt of St Michan's, Dublin, that inspired *Dracula*. And not only was Le Fanu's grandfather prebendary of St Michan's, but two of these corpses were friends of the family, executed as rebels in 1798. Supernaturalism, Anglo-Irishry and nationalism are concentrated here in a brew too heady for all but the most dedicated ghost-hunter.

Though the questions addressed by Dr McCormack are not directly connected with such speculations, they cannot be excluded; and one of the qualities of his excellent study is the train of associations which it provokes. It is far more than a revaluation of Le Fanu, though this is incidentally provided in a discriminating and scholarly way; simplistic previous analyses like Michael Begnal's are mentioned incidentally in the text but not listed in the bibliography, indicating the treading of a completely new path. The massive hint is, as with *Ulysses*, in the title. "Victorian Ireland" may, as Dr McCormack remarks, seem a "surprising" concept; not so "surprising" to those historians who have reinterpreted nineteenth-century Irish history in terms of administrative and economic modernization, but certainly providing a new angle from which to approach the flowering of Anglo-Irish literary culture at the end of the century. The "poetic turbulence and nearly romantic violence" which the too often-quoted land agent William Steuart Trench rapturously recalled in tranquillity needs revaluation in its literary as well as its historical context; the world of urban protestant values, literary clubs, amateur antiquarianism, and the *Dublin University Magazine* has its own momentum and provides its own continuities between the consciousness of the late eighteenth century and the late nineteenth. It is this world which Dr McCormack illuminates, along with the more private and tortured universe of Le Fanu himself.

Indeed, the subject could not have been better chosen: his limitations as an artist are compensated for (and in a way caused by) his aptness as a repository of Anglo-Irish contradictions. Descended from aristocratic Sheridans and Huguenot Le Fanus, a childhood in a Limerick glebe house during the tithe war, a friend of Butt and Gavan Duffy, a writer of nationalist ballads in his youth (sung to great acclaim by his irrepressible brother at Dublin Castle functions), an irreconcilable Irish Tory in middle age, a Merrion Square recluse at the end of his life: dying in 1873, on the edge of dramatic realignments in Irish history. The novels and stories, at first historical romances and then tales of terror, accompanied his career first as law student and then as magazine proprietor; deaths in the family, financial decline, widowerhood, and the changing state of the nation all have their place in the progression they trace. It is Dr McCormack's achievement to relate the life and the work both more subtly and more reliably than has ever been attempted before; indefatigable searching in the Dublin Registry of Deeds, contemporary journals, and several manuscript collections has brought to light previously unattributed work, evidence of a marriage far less happy than hitherto supposed, and an absorbing strain of political and religious ambivalence.

Swedenborgianism in Le Fanu's life and work is carefully evaluated, which leads to the book's critical *tour de force*: a brilliant reading of *Uncle Silas* as a manifesto of Swedenborgian dualism, where wicked uncle represents the spirit form of dead father, and the heroine's journey from one great house to the other paces out a far more directly spiritual quest. One may wonder how much the assonances and correspondences between the two halves of the tale are in fact simply evidences of Le Fanu's very real limitation of creative talent, which often took refuge in repetition of patterns; but Dr McCormack's interpretation, working back from the conclusion in the book's last paragraph that "the world is a parable—the habitation of symbols—the phantoms of spiritual things immortal shown in material shape", carries a conviction which no other treatment has provided. A similar discerning imagination is evident in his criticism of Le Fanu's less impressive work: he is not afraid to dismiss it in creative terms, even when it reflects an enlightening social reality.

Which is where "Victorian Ireland" comes in; and the most interesting chapter in Dr McCormack's study is the last, a wide-ranging critique of Anglo-Irish fiction which, while avoiding the mechanistic excesses of some sociological criticism, calls for a reassessment and a new approach. "The apparent solidity of the novel tradition in Ireland is largely an illusion generated in the minds of recent historians"; a completely new approach to fiction of *all* types in nineteenth-century Ireland, and the context within which it was purveyed and read, is urgently called for. No historian or literary critic could disagree, though Dr McCormack's point that no "school" existed, since no coherent group of novelists were at work simultaneously, begs some questions: the European background, of which, as he himself notes, Irish writers remained very conscious, can provide links such as that from Maria Edgeworth to George Moore's *Muslin* via Turgeney. None the less, his view of the limitations of Anglo-Irish novels as linked to views of Irish society grouped in "non-congruent worlds" must carry great conviction, and applies to Banim or Griffin as much as to Le Fanu.

The variety and ambivalence of the Anglo-Irish world, its mixture of vitality and apathy, the monumental irrelevance of much of what it stood for, its eventual repudiation of the new nationalism which it helped to launch just before Le Fanu died: all this must find its place in a critique of Anglo-Irish literature which is related to contemporary social consciousness as much as to retrospective ideas of national literary "development".

And in this process, begun here by Dr McCormack, Le Fanu comes through as an avatar. Most of all in *Uncle Silas*, which though ostensibly located in Derbyshire is really, as Elizabeth Bowen pointed out long ago, an Irish novel: Dr McCormack shows us that it was the publisher who insisted upon an English setting. It remains some kind of masterpiece, far above his other work (even in style it is unlike anything else he wrote, except some stories in *In A Glass Darkly*, being muscular, brief and colloquial). For Dr McCormack's purposes, Le Fanu's early historical work, heavily influenced by Scott, has its own importance. *The Cock and Anchor*, an eighteenth-century romance, prefigures a good deal in the way of immured heroines, forced marriages, obsessive architectural descriptions, and themes of family pride and betrayal; but it conveys an individual atmosphere of eighteenth-century Dublin which retains interest, and indicates a wider preoccupation.

More original is *The House by the Churchyard*, an extraordinary, rambling evocation of life in Chapelizod in 1767, centred round the interaction between a Royal Irish Artillery Barracks and local society. It leaps mischievously from sub-plot to sub-plot, interminably long, full of strange glancing insights and narrative tricks of stories within stories (suggesting Maturin again, or even a glance forward to *At Swim Two Birds*): impossible to read at length, and impossible altogether, but compulsively interesting to those preoccupied by the significance and continuities of the Anglo-Irish imagination.

Indeed, those who have shown an interest in this strange, transitional figure are significant. Elizabeth Bowen's preface to *Uncle Silas* was the most perceptive commentary available before Dr McCormack; her own story *The Demon Lover* is powerfully in the Le Fanu tradition, and his "hermetically sealed world" is reflected in her Irish novels. V. S. Pritchett has also paid him attention; and Henry James makes a hero late for dinner by becoming absorbed in a Le Fanu novel left by his bedside in a country house, "ideal reading for the hours after midnight". Dr McCormack adds Synge to the canon; and Joyce, of course, paid an ironic tribute in memorializing his own visionary version of Chapelizod. But in general, a phrase applied by Le Fanu to a well-meaning English soldier in *The House by the Churchyard* could stand as the epitaph of those who have latterly ignored him: "too literal to see, and too honest to enjoy, the absurd side". This can be taken to refer to more than social comedy.

The larger relevance is in a view of Irish life: which is why his admission of the mediocrity, derivativeness and sensationalism of much of Le Fanu's work does nothing to vitiate the value of Dr McCormack's book. The Anglo-Irish vision of the Ireland of Le Fanu's day has a direct relationship to alienation, brides of death, and imprisonment in decayed great houses; but this connection is in itself too simplistic. Much more enlightening is the world of the *Dublin University Magazine*, the brief hopes of national revival entertained by a Protestant middle-class elite in the mid-century, the ambivalence of the culture that produced not only Le Fanu's youthful rebel ballads but the complex identifications of his friends like Samuel Ferguson—poet, antiquarian, Tory, nationalist—and Gavan Duffy, who progressed from irredentist Young Irelander to colonial governor, and led Lord Carnarvon into the position of a latter-day Fitzwilliam in 1885.

The view of the eighteenth century in Le Fanu's work (one of the few areas not explored in depth by Dr McCormack) is relevant here. Both in his historical novels and in *Uncle Silas* it stands for indiscipline, vice and infidelity, but also for vitality and tradition; his own family's conscious roots were deep within it, and as with *all* the Anglo-Irish it was looked back to as a lost Golden Age. This is a constant in nineteenth-century Anglo-Irish commentaries: a past era of good relations between landlord and tenant, Protestant and Catholic, is religiously invoked. Sometimes the myth was in reference to "before the Encumbered Estates Act" (which was how the Anglo-Irish read the Famine), later on it was "before the Land War"; in the classic memoir written by Le Fanu's brother William, *Seventy Years of Irish Life*, it is "before the Tithe War". The lost world invoked by this folk memory involved an easy relation between Anglo-Irish and their dependants; and much of Le Fanu's Irish vision is to do with fond memories of class and racial collusion (his servants play an important part). This is the kind of bizarre nostalgia to be found in contemporary works like the three-volume survey of Ireland written by his friends Mr and Mrs S. C. Hall in 1840; here the innocent travellers unwittingly show themselves sent up on every page by expansively cynical natives determined not to disappoint their preconceptions. (Solicitously inquiring the circumstances of an inmate of Longford workhouse, they were met by the courteous rejoinder: "Sure, I'd do anything in reason to oblige the gentry; *and so I came in here*.")

This is not as far from Dr McCormack's concerns as it may seem. Le Fanu helped the Halls with their book, and probably enjoyed the jokes at their expense; but his own vision of Ireland found it increasingly hard to reconcile the imposed historical consciousness of the Anglo-Irish memory with the reality beyond Merrion Square. Congratulating his cousin Lord Dufferin on *not* being appointed Viceroy in 1868, he wrote that despite "the flowers on top . . . all rests on a quaking bog". This dualism pervaded his life and his work; the merriment of his brother's deliberately blinkered memoir, compared to his own gloomy vision, is one aspect of it. Others are explored in Dr McCormack's fascinating study, the great strength of which is in never analysing the achievement of its subject out of proportion; but in identifying the preoccupations of the middle-class Anglo-Irish in retreat, of a world which, underneath the facade of Castle society, was as fitfully lit and riven with alarms as any represented in Le Fanu's fiction.

The Ballad of Erse O. Really?

(A Nonsense Of Ireland)

Oh, sure you'll have heard of that witwandering scholar
that was in for a penny and in for a pound and in for an almighty dollar
how he opened the eyes of the faculties with his don's donnees like valerian
antispaspasmodic and clumping about with his bad rhymes like a megatherium

(Chorus) Jim McJoyce's silly sanitarium
full of delirium!

He was the boyo for all the accredited academicals
Arragh! they tested every sinful syllable with their syllabub syllabus chemicals
but he wron away from them still catcalling teasily
Let the rabbit see the stoat! *They were woeful and weaselly.*

(Chorus) He sang breezily
Hell Comes Easily!

For the Muse had him by the horn and no Englit sanitary Deportment
could prize them apart, it was synthetic and a seamless garment
she let him feel the weight of her Titfield Thunderbolts surely
it was a game with spatial rules, it was educated hurley

(Chorus) Short and curly
she loved him dearly

So they never gat him, though they brought in a true bill of damages
and put a spectral scanner onto his sob-standard Skandiknavian languages
He was too one too much for them, in Cameforth, Oxbritches and Iowa
they never neutered his nastiness with Festicles of Light at Rhayader

(Chorus) Take a short ride on her
with a girl guide on her.

Homage Comforts Exiles. *He sang like an aviary.*
This is his Celtic abbreviated breviary.

Gavin Ewart

Fun from failure

By John Lahr

EDYTHE M. McGOVERN:
Neil Simon
A Critical Study
204pp. New York: Ungar. $12.50.
0 8044 2567 1

Re-reading the thirteen plays he had written in sixteen years since he made his theatrical début on Broadway in 1961, Neil Simon said, "When I was good, I was very, very good . . . and when I was bad, we folded." But not many of Simon's plays folded, and the ones that stayed open became some of the most popular and biggest money-makers in Broadway's chequered history. Having started out as a TV gag writer, Simon now owns his own Broadway theatre (the Eugene O'Neill) and estimates that from his royalties he earns about £15,000 a day.

No man ever got rich in America by telling the truth: reality is the last thing members of a Broadway audience will pay for. At twenty dollars a seat, they want escape, and Simon has a good line in distraction. His plays are about the people who pay to see them—decent, hard-working, repressed, mostly Jewish New Yorkers exhausted by the city and the expectations of American life. They are the sons and daughters of immigrants, genial over-achievers who, in their search for roots, have attained wealth at the cost of happiness and are trying to snatch some scraps of pleasure from the emptiness around them.

Simon understands the small man, and he never talks down to him. Where Woody Allen, Simon's only rival in comedy, salts his jokes with literary references, parodies and asides about the hip life which make him popular with the young, Simon's comedies speak to the parents who don't know all the big words or smart places. "Life has not only been unkind to me, it goes out of its way to ignore me", says Barney Cashman, a Simon *schlepper*, in *Last of the Red Hot Lovers*. "I ask myself, 'Have you enjoyed it Barney? Was it a really terrific forty-seven years?' And you know what my answer is? 'Well, I wouldn't say it was terrific. It was nice.' The sum total of my existence is nice. I will go to my grave having had a nice life."

Cashman, who dreams of being a secret swinger, ends by phoning up his wife for an assignation in his borrowed apartment. The situation epitomizes Simon's comic stock-in-trade: a protagonist "in losing control. I can't handle things any more", kvetches Mel, the amnesiac hero of *Prisoner of Second Avenue*. "I forgot how to work the water cooler today." Simon's women also turn moaning into humour are form. When Karen, in "Visitor from Mamaroneck" (the first part of *Plaza Suite*) discovers that her fifty-seven-year-old husband has been cheating on her, she says "You're taken care of. You're having an affaire. I'm the one who needs an activity." Up to the 1940s, American comedy was physical and rambunctious. But Broadway laughter, like American life, has gradually lost its edge. The old comedians created a panic. Simon's comic figures are panic-stricken at their sense of failure. They are powerless to change their lives. The sense of being trapped speaks deeply to the suburban audiences that applaud the plays and keep them in hard-back beside the plastic fruit.

Simon has addressed himself to this point:

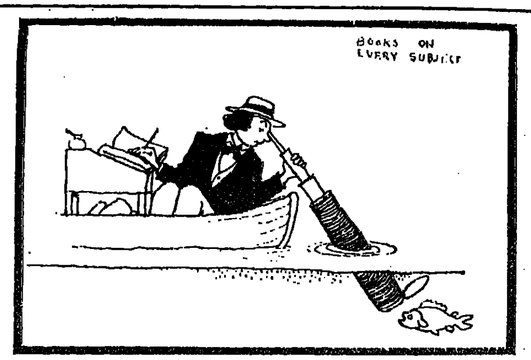
> In *The Odd Couple*, Oscar says to Felix: "You mean you have no idea of changing". And Felix says: "I am what I am". When I look around in life, most people who are in trouble know what their problems are. This becomes sadder to people over forty because they feel their characters are determined. . . . They're trapped. The trap is themselves, not necessarily life.

Simon's characters and his stage machinery themselves suffer from a hardening of the arteries. The repertoire of movement in his plays consists of standing, sitting, and crossing to the drinks cabinet. In *Prisoner of Second Avenue* a man is hit in the face with a bucket of water thrown from the patio above; in *Plaza Suite* the father of the bride crawls on a window ledge in an effort to coax his daughter to her senses and out of the locked bathroom. So much for *coups de théâtre*. Simon is equally uninventive with language. Having hardly enough energy to live, his characters are as sloppy about their speech as they are about life. *California Suite* begins with a husband dragging his wife back into the hotel room after a tennis match and phoning up the opposing husband-wife team. "How is she? How do you think she is? Her foot may be broken", says Mort to his "friend" Stu. "What can you do? I'll tell you what you can do. I want you to go to the pro-shop and buy two cans of yellow tennis balls, charge them to me, and shove them up your respective asses."

To be fair, two of Simon's plays, *The Odd Couple* (1965), about a pair of separated husbands setting up house together and *The Sunshine Boys* (1971), which extends male bickering into old age in a tale about the comeback of two crotchety vaudevillians, are astutely observed and skilfully developed characterizations. *The Sunshine Boys*, a composite of some of America's early great clowns, shows Simon at his most affectionate and original. The old vaudevillians had the grace of angels and the souls of tailors; and Simon gets this poignant and hilarious contradiction just right. "I spent my life growing up with these men", Simon has written. "If they spoke in one-liners and punch lines instead of conversation, it's only because it was the only language they knew. Spend a few afternoons around the Friar's Club, a hangout for aging comedians, and a pencil, a pad and a discriminating ear will record for you some of the funniest and saddest dialogue you ever heard." Simon's superb portrait of this dying breed of American go-getter also allows him to use a vivacious old vaudeville routine and thereby put more life on stage than is usually found in a Neil Simon play.

Edythe M. McGovern's *Neil Simon: A Critical Study* is an incidentally hilarious résumé of his work. The book calls itself criticism, but it is really only a fan's notes. The author enjoys the footnote as much as Michael Holroyd. She footnotes such concepts as "universality", giving us the benefit of her erudition. "Playwrights in the tradition of Ben Jonson, Molière, and George Bernard Shaw successfully raised fundamental tragic issues without eschewing the comic mode, and it is my firm conviction that Neil Simon should be considered in this company." But she gives the reader no analysis, debate, nor information to justify her idolatry. By her criteria, if Simon makes a value judgment, he is a moralist; if he writes an epigram, he is a wit; if his plays have a beginning, middle and an end, he is a classicist. Her book, which, in effect, only provides the plots of Simon's plays, is an example of what the late Jimmy Durante used to call "non-friction".

Simon thanks Edythe McGovern in his foreword to her book for "giving the comic playwright a serious retrospective". That's exactly what she has not done. By claiming everything for Simon, she convinces us of nothing. Simon's plays deserve much more abrasive scrutiny. They are important. They mark the final phase of Broadway's long decline. They contain no surprise, no outrageousness, no movement, no improvization, no vulgarity, no joy or extremes of any kind. They are popular without being playful. His stage comedy is hardly distinguishable from television sitcom; and although the laughter isn't canned; it's homogenized. He has no comic vision, but merely a slick comic voice crying *oi vais* all the way to the bunk.



One of W. Heath Robinson's ink drawings from a series of eleven arranged in one frame. An item in Sotheby's sale of English Illustrated Books and Drawings this week. The sale includes watercolour illustrations by Tenniel to The Tempest *and* Twelfth Night.

Sehr funny, ja?

By John Wells

JOHN ECCLESTON:
Test a Moment/Englische Witze
83pp. Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag. DM4.80.

To make a selection of English jokes for foreign, in this case German, consumption is a sensitive assignment. At first sight, John Eccleston's little collection seems a worthy enough effort: English jokes laid out, as it by a painstaking mortician, on the left-hand page, their German equivalent on the right, with little touches of Englishness to lend a look of authenticity —"*Tibbles* darf nie hinaus, und andere Katzen dürfen nie ins Haus hinein". Tibbles, it should perhaps be explained, has just baffled the speaker, an English spinster, by producing a litter of kittens by her brother, an unnamed English tom-cat sitting in the armchair opposite.

There is even a brief note by Mr Eccleston at the back, in which he warns German readers that English is unusually rich in homophones, homonyms and homograms, and tries bravely to explain in German why a newspaper story about a mentally deranged rapist attacking a group of laundresses and making good his escape should merit the headline "Nut screws washers and bolts".

More reassuring still he adds a paragraph to the effect that English jokes are about much the same things as jokes in any other country. We have he says, marginally more interested in the royal family and black humour, we think of Scotsmen as being mean, "obwohl Insider wissen, dass eher das Gegenteil zutrifft" (although insiders know that, if anything, the opposite is the case), and look upon the Irish very much as a German looks upon the inhabitants of East Friesland. Otherwise we are perfectly normal.

On closer inspection however, grave doubts begin to arise. Is Mr Eccleston, a man who can choose a title like *Test a Moment*, ideally cut out to be our Ambassador of Fun to the Hun? Our greatest single anxiety in Mr Eccleston's book, East Frisians or not East Frisians, is about the Irish. The largest proportion of the jokes are inspired by our view of that long-suffering race of poets and dreamers as being mentally subnormal, e.g. "What's the quickest way to get an Irishman with a burnt ear? Blanks him up while he's ironing". Next, second equal to these, comes jokes suggesting a terror of death and jokes based on a horror of waiters, all of them English, poisoning us with soup containing insect life.

As the distorted panorama of English Life unfolds a torpid London docker kicking a tortoise on the grounds that "it has been following him round all day", a rootless youth buying 387 beetles, eighteen rats and five mice in a pet-shop to "Pin and Nipple" himself, buried among the biographies of this formulaistic showbiz story is its one interesting revelation: "In Paramount Studios was Ladd's surrogate father. There is no doubting who stood in for his mother . . . examining . . . consciously on the unhinged, morbid neurotics that hope uncomprehending about our English streets—one becomes aware of a consistent mocking tone, systematically undermining belief in England.

At times it is almost as if we were listening again to Lord Haw-Haw himself. "During the floods in south-east England, twenty people had lost their lives, cattle had been killed, buildings damaged and crops ruined, when the captain of the darts team rowed his boat into the bar of the Red Lion and said: 'What? Has the match been cancelled?'". Not, you might object, a joke in the strict sense of the word; and you would be right. Indeed the nearest thing to an English joke in the whole book is the one query above about Paddy and the Hairdrier. But as devastating proof of the damaging image of demoralization and insanity, not to say one in the eye for the British Tourist Authority.

Once the purpose of the book is understood, evidence that we are here in the hands not of mere clumsy misrepresentation but of a "mind" bent on selling us down the river very quickly comes to light. Over-confident, Jerry has left in German "jokes" without any attempts to disguise them: "How did you get that puncture (Pinn)?" "I went over a nutty bottle (Herr Oberfeldwebel)". "But why didn't you see it?" "Because a stupid kid had it under his coat!". The third most popular category in the book, incredibly enough, are jokes about linguistic incompetence. "Have you seriously expected us to believe that any true-born Britisher would attempt to raise a laugh by telling a story about an international conference being asked whether anyone spoke German and an Englishman saying "Mich"? To elicit the cold Dickensian laugh in the best traditions of the British spy thriller, gives him self away with a schoolboy howler. *Tragan*, as we all know, means either to wear or to carry. Of the grotesque *Krokodile*, observed by the gleeful English manager on safari in Africa, we are told that "kein einziges war eine Handtasche". On the opposite page, in the so-called English original, "not one of them *was wearing* a handbag".

I suppose it was by the name Eccleston that fooled me. So clever so reassuringly English. But not clever enough. Herr Eccleston. We shall meet, I think, at the Trevor-Lucas-Mellen, Examination of the Unbalanced Mind.

Trench-coat hero

By David Wilson

BEVERLY LINET:
Ladd: The Life, The Legend, The Legacy of Alan Ladd
283pp. Robson. £7.50.
0 86051 007 2

"Everyone loved him: it seemed except Alan himself." He wanted to play T. E. Lawrence, did play Gatsby (of which performance *Time* magazine remarked that he looked "about as comfortable as a gunman at a garden party"), and in his own estimation never failed to live let down when he saw himself on screen. Diminutive, laconic, suggesting in his toneless voice and frozen smile a peculiarly American blend of hardness and vulnerability, Alan Ladd public image was that of a modestly talented actor. Of the scores of films he made most are deservedly forgotten, fodder at best for insomniacs watching the late-late show. But if the critics were unimpressed (and they usually were), the movie-going public disagreed; at his peak in the 1940s Ladd was one of Hollywood's most popular stars, regularly near the top of the box office polls. For his studio, Paramount, he was a very bankable asset.

This according to his biographer Beverly Linet, may have been at least partly to blame for his fall from grace. Following his overnight success in *This Gun for Hire*, in which Ladd's role appeared opposite Veronica Lake as the unexpected psychopathic killer who turns patriot in the last reel, Ladd was pushed into films which had nothing in common except their mediocrity. He was cowboy, pirate, soldier, but he had created an image, and needed the grey raincoat and the mean streets to embellish it, as he did in *The Glass Key* and *The Blue Dahlia*. One later film, *Shane*, had a part made for him in Nine Hollywood heaven. But it was a sport, and thereafter Ladd's career was downhill and drink.

Beverly Linet fills out this rather sorry tale with a good deal of inconsequential chitchat. An "intimate" of Hollywood for more than thirty years (as her publishers describe her), she is reliably and loquaciously informative on such matters as the colour schemes of Ladd's Hollywood mansion, and discreet enough about his peccadilloes to please all the many parties she has interviewed. All—family, friends and colleagues unanimously agree that Alan Ladd was sensitive and insecure, and probably happier on his non-substantial ranch than on the studio floor. Gossip columnists, even the formidable duet of Louella Parsons and Hedda Hopper, sheltered him ("That is Cyrano wrote the poems which captured Roxinne's heart for Christian; so did Basket, with the first-person dialogue attributed to Alan, help capture America", says Ms Linet of one of those publicist protectors).

Insistently, though—and not always between the lines—the evidence accumulates that the key to Alan Ladd's interiority complex was not his rough beginnings (his mother killed herself by swallowing put paste), not his lack of stature (more than one actress was obliged to stand in a ditch for two-shots), but the forceful influence of the woman who was his first agent, then his second wife, and who wanted him to succeed. When Ladd appeared with his son David in *The Proud Rebel*, Ms Linet reveals, Parents Magazine bestowed on him its "Pin and Nipple" award, buried among the biographer's data for militaristic showbiz story is its one interesting revelation: in Paramount Studios was Ladd's surrogate father. There is no doubting who stood in for his mother . . . examining . . . consciously on the unhinged, morbid neurotics that hope uncomprehending about our English streets—one becomes aware of a consistent mocking tone, systematically undermining belief in England.

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viewpoint

ALBERTO ARBASINO

Violence—our old Italian ferocity—and abstract discussion—our traditional habit of endless theoretical debate—these now appear as the most remarkable "new" features of the 1970s in Italy. So much that was written, said, done, and actually "lived", during that tormented decade, might now be seen as a violent collective refusal to confront the real problems and contradictions of a post-modern age. This seems to be the true psycho-drama of Italian youth culture today, which is a traumatic attempt to recover the most typical and popular values of our historical past—as in Khomeini's Iran.

In both these cases, a country full of ancient traditions and conventions—and resentments—refuses to enter the so-called contemporary world—and face its true themes. And in Italy, as in Iran, it is not the old, the nostalgic or the reactionary, who fight in the streets to reaffirm the Genius Loci, but the young, set on regaining our own deepest "roots", not out of cultural fashions (these are usually mere fads in Italy) but driven by a profound national instinct.

This rediscovery of a national identity "mislaid" during the two "anomalous" and "cosmopolitan" decades of brief economic boom (the fifties and sixties) appears absolutely authentic, youthful and spontaneous, just like the Iranian students' reversion to the principles of Islam. It may seem striking because it is taking place in an age when the sense of history has largely been lost and the collective memory rejected. Paradoxically therefore—in the land of Giambattista Vico's "corsi e ricorsi storici" (a maxim much taught in the old days in Italian schools)—each phenomenon now tends to appear as a worrisome novelty rather than as a "return of the repressed". But this was also the *theme* of a famous old quarrel about Fascism; "Revolution or Revelation?"—as the *maîtres à penser* asked themselves earlier in the twentieth century. Croce, for instance, spoke of Fascism as a "revolution", that is to say "an unfortunate disturbance in a fundamentally healthy body", as "an inauspicious nightmare destined to melt like mist in the morning sun". Whereas Giustino Fortunato, Gaetano Salvemini and Antonio Gramsci saw it rather in terms of a revelation, as an ancient and disgraceful anthropological constant.

Thus, paradoxically again, even *I promessi sposi* (which until recently seemed as remote from us as the seventeenth century in which it set) offers surprisingly topical descriptions of present-day events. The *signorotti*, the *bravi*, the edicts against the *bravi*, and the pettifogging lawyers' replies thereto. Disturbances in the piazza, and the sacking and looting of shops. The "days when the capes bow to the doublets". The baying for blood and the plottings of police informers. "Seething passions, fanatical partisanship, criminal designs, an accursed relish for disorder, ruthless advice, the casual merging of extremists from both sides." The search for the instigators, the arrest of suspects, flight abroad. And a woman walking alone, bandits approaching in their carriage, an abduction. . . . And the charismatic archbishop's pastoral visits. And the threadbare poverty of the nobility in the days of hunger and famine. And in the event of the plague, as in the recent dioxin episode at Seveso near Milan, contradictory and inadequate warnings, belated and ineffective remedies, credulity, incredulity, disputes, incompetence, mistrust and disorganization in the hospitals. And strange signs on the walls, graffiti, writings: "perversity and disorder, a delirium of the populace and of the clergy". And inquisitions, indignation, denunciations, suspicions, complicated trials based on unreliable evidence.

Above all two immortal characters from *I promessi sposi*, Don Rodrigo and Don Ferrante, the arrogant "signorotto" and the learned scholar, provide us with two labels if we want to understand the most conspicuous "corsi e ricorsi storici" of our own 1970s.

The Don Rodrigo component: the Renaissance (and medieval) violence which delighted Elizabethan dramatists, Gothic novelists, Stendhal, and contemporary French intellectuals, greedy for Stendhalian Italy and Italian melodrama. Local potentates surrounded by private armies of henchmen and bodyguards; mansions transformed into fortresses; armed gangs; street fighting; assaults, aggressions, kidnappings, assassinations; feuds and vendettas; the taking of prisoners and the taking of the law into one's own hands; in particular (Machiavellian) mode of combat, whereby several armed men ambush one or two unarmed ones, an assault subsequently celebrated as a "feat of war".

And the Don Ferrante component: the primacy and prestige of ideological debate—always abstract, as in the culture of the Baroque Age—with a corresponding intolerance for all practical or realistic considerations even in matters of politics and economics. Don Ferrante dies of the plague, amid a wealth of erudite quotations and rhetorical and dialectical subtleties, having insisted on seeing it as a theoretical "stellar" entity, and not as an actual disease. He is an invariable in Italian culture. He spends his days—his whole life and career indeed—composing sonnets and treaties in the innermost room of his apartment, plugging his ears so as not to hear the massacres in the street below, writing about his childhood, his achievements, his feelings, and the interesting differences or nuances between his former and his present positions. Man and society are mere pretexts for academic talk, and he disregards them when they do not conform to the approved formula. The Don Ferrantes are always with us: after twelve years of struggle, of assemblies, meetings, seminars and congresses, most "new" Italian intellectuals talk not of realistic political plans, but of subtle differences between ideological stances.

The D'Annunzio syndrome has also returned: the fighting bourgeois vitalism of D'Annunzio and the Futurists and the warlike "trips" of bookish intellectuals trying to impose themselves on an inflammable public, in tremulous, excited prose, as the armed leaders of bloody and emotive enterprises. Resurfacing also is the vitalism of the proletariat and the sub-proletariat which has constantly transformed Italian cities (from Dante's Florence to the Verona of *Romeo and Juliet*, etc) into battlefields fought over by feuding neighbourhood bands of ruffians, identifiable by the colours they wear, whose territories are rigidly defined (this street is "white", that bar "black", that piazza "red", etc) and who are continually involved in raids into "enemy territory", in street fights and in interminable vendettas with no "general" or "final" aim but only "personal" or "local" reprisals.

The most modern ideological motives and sociological labels are now pinned to such well-known centuries-old Italian characteristics as "il dolce far niente" and "l'arte d'arrangiarsi"; to the struggles between corporations to claim individual privileges at the expense of the collectivity; to the connivance between the State and the outlawed; to the disgraceful delapidation of collective resources; to an uncertainty and vagueness with regard to rights and to justice; to a reversion even to the ancient passion for corteges and processions, a whole tradition of vital energy squandered on funeral rites, on the commemoration of sacred anniversaries, on appeals in chorus to the dead, who are seen as still "living among us".

Italy has always been a country much given to dreaming, and in recent decades has demonstrated this at least three times, in cycles of irresistible collective illusion, followed on each occasion by noisy disillusionment and an irreparable collapse. In the first cycle, in the 1930s and 1940s, almost all young Italians became belated militarists, convincing themselves they were great soldiers, great conquerors and great colonists; they were everywhere beaten and the country was left in ruins.

In the second cycle, in the 1950s and 1960s (as belated industrializers), Italians believed that they were great engineers and petrochemists; soon after which the major industries, instead of producing wealth for the country, devoured colossal subsidies in order to meet their huge deficits. Finally, in the 1970s, an era no longer particularly healthy for ideologies, many young Italians saw themselves as laboratories for avant-garde politics and discarded everything that had belonged to the past they despised: prejudices, taboos, experience, culture, history and the collective memory; and all agricultural, professional, commercial, artistic and technical knowledge.

But the rejection of experience is equivalent to the destruction of machinery. As a consequence of this jettisoning of the past, we have had a sudden and precedented wave of revivalism and "rétro-modes". The 1970s are the first decade which did not build its own style, or image or physiognomy, but, unlike its predecessors, dredged up its themes, inspirations, fashions and hairstyles from earlier decades. Will it therefore be remembered and evaluated as a patchwork or collage?

Youth culture today, then, first discarded the whole of the past then immediately inaugurated a period of unprecedented revivalism in fashion and taste: old clothes, old furniture, old records, old films, old ideas and old-fashioned food. Revolution and destruction serve not to win freedom from chains and individual liberty, but a life-long, secure job in the bureaucracy and integration into the *piccola borghesia*. Its challenge to the capitalism of the multi-nationals has led finally to its becoming the best customer of the crudest, most immediate and primitive of multi-nationals, the capitalism of drugs.

But here we see a striking innovation. Until recently drugs were associated in Italy with the "Right", with the *haute bourgeoisie* and café society (just as violence also was considered to be fascist and right-wing). Today drugs and violence alike are associated with the left, because both are seen as a sort of youthful, proletarian protest against "questa società di merda" which offers neither work nor shame as our most unfortunate national characteristics re-emerge intact from the past, knowing it would probably be a lost cause to try and overcome them, just as it would be hypocrisy to conceal or misrepresent them". Or, on the contrary, should we feel relief and hope, knowing that so many times in the past Italy has succeeded in extricating itself from identical difficulties and contradictions? Despite the daggers and the guitars, the guns and the disco music, Italy may be getting by as usual, as if she had fondly recovered her true, authentic self, after the "inauthentic" decades of the 1950s and 60s?

Coping with contagion

By Michael Mallett

CARLO M. CIPOLLA:
I pidocchi e il Granduca
113pp. Bologna: Il Mulino. L5,000.

One of the good results of the opening of the European University in Florence is that it has led to a translation of new blood into Florentine historical scholarship. Foremost among the newcomers is Carlo Cipolla who has been exploring that great growth area in Florentine studies, the period of the Grand Dukes. His latest book deals with the outbreak of typhus which hit the city during the winter months of 1620-21. Typhus is transmitted by infected lice which prosper in insanitary living conditions, particularly in winter when their hosts are less inclined to wash. That contemporaries were unaware of this process, and even thought that the disease was not contagious, is one of the major themes of the book. It was this ignorance which contributed largely to the failure of the Florentine government to cope adequately with the epidemic.

However, before embarking on the details of the epidemic and Florence's responses to it, Professor Cipolla discusses the possible relationships between periods of famine, epidemics, and broader levels of economic depression and disruption. He concludes that the links are more subtle and complex than is often assumed; in this case the epidemic preceded the worst of a series of famine years (1621) but was undoubtedly conditioned by preliminary years of dearth. Similarly the economic depression and unemployment which Florence experienced in the early 1620s was more the result of the collapse of European markets for her luxury cloth than of internal famine and epidemic conditions. The fundamental point is made, and this also has relevance for students of the post-Black Death economy, that Florentine industry was essentially geared to exports and therefore was less affected than many urban industries by changing patterns of internal demand.

The typhus outbreak was, in fact, not particularly lethal, but this was more because of the nature of the disease than because of any effective counter-measures undertaken by the Grand Ducal government. During an eight-month period some 3,000 people died in Florence, which was approximately double the normal number of deaths in such a period. However, the officials responsible, the Magistrato della Sanità, were very worried, both because of the generally unhygienic level of living conditions and the particularly appalling conditions in the hospitals which their investigations revealed, and because of a misconceived view that the typhus outbreak was a preliminary to a plague epidemic.

Cipolla describes three levels of response to the outbreak; first there was a concern to see that Florentine hospitals did not become overcrowded. This concern stemmed partly from a genuine desire to avoid a breakdown of the public medical services, and partly from an anxiety to stifle publicity and consequent imposition of a *cordon sanitaire* by neighbouring states, with all the economic implications of such a situation.

Instructions were issued to the hospitals to increase the number of beds available and particularly to provide small single beds so that typhus patients in extremis could die in a minimum of privacy. But the health officials found that as most of the hospitals were controlled by the Church there was a tendency for them to resist bureaucratic supervision by the State. In this resistance the hospitals were actually supported by the Grand Duke himself, who was anxious to avoid any confrontation between Church and State. Thus the whole episode throws light on the relations between religious and secular authorities in early seventeenth-century Italy.

The second level of response was an attempt to institute a system of free medical care for the victims in their homes, which were almost exclusively in the poorer areas of the city. This policy, although remarkably enlightened in some respects, was both immensely costly and, given the contagious nature of the disease, thoroughly misguided. Thirdly, the health officials tried to improve living conditions with new regulations on the disposal of night soil, and by other attempts to control the overpowering stench which pervaded the city.

This short book is an outstanding example of Cipolla's ability to draw broad and important conclusions out of a relatively minor and localized episode; so indeed, in fact, a valuable book out of material which many scholars would relegate to a learned article. The insights which he provides on living conditions in pre-industrial cities have a universal application, as do those on the activity of seventeenth-century bureaucracy. In this latter area, perhaps, one could have wished for more background material on the working of Grand Ducal government, and indeed on the Grand Dukes themselves. The point is never made that at the height of the epidemic experienced and widely respected Cosimo II died, to be replaced by his boy son and a regency which was noted for its ineffectiveness and its attachment, to the Church, given the important contrast which is drawn between the attitudes of the patrician administrators and those of the Grand Duke himself this seems an odd omission.

But in the last resort, it is the key contrast between the relatively enlightened and sophisticated approach of the officials in practical matters, and their total ignorance, both of the nature of the disease with which they were dealing and of the normal living conditions of the lower classes, which is the most striking message of the book.

Dramatic depictions

By Roger Savage

ALLARDYCE NICOLL:

The Garrick Stage
Theatres and Audiences in the Eighteenth Century

??pp. 116 illustrations. Manchester University Press. £14.50.
0 7190 0768 2

The eighteenth century in England, the latter part of it especially, was a great age of drama-depiction. It snowed frontispieces to playscripts, engravings of productions, evocations of pit, box and gallery, and ambitious easel-paintings after Shakespeare. Admittedly you would only need a small room to house all the pictures which have real artistic quality. But if your interest is in playhouses, playwrights and performers, every one of the hundreds of surviving pictures and plans has something to say. In fact it would be valuable to have all of them published as a single corpus with learned commentary.

Allardyce Nicoll's *The Garrick Stage* is not such a *catalogue raisonné* but it does have all of 116 illustrations, well-chosen for the most part (if too often mistily reproduced) and admirably integrated with the text; and the most probing and valuable sections of the text itself are concerned with the visual evidence for Georgian theatre, its sources, its categories and the proper ways of reading it. These, Nicoll argues, combine caution with active imagination. That frontispiece of Mrs X in a dressy tragic role; that sketch of a playhouse with a play in full swing; that academic-sublime landscape called "Prospero's Cell" or "Macbeth Encountering the Witches". One should not automatically take them at face value. It may well be that Mrs X never played the role, that the sketch leaves out features of the building which were certainly visible to the sketcher, that no stage machinery at the time could get anywhere near making those geological shapes or that sort of weather. But one should not reject the pictures either. The frontispiece may tell us something about the lady's ambitions, the sketch shows by omission what parts of the playhouse the average playgoer took for granted, the sublime landscape suggest what the same playgoer *thought* he saw when seduced by candlelight, well-spoken blank verse, two-dimensional wings and shutters and a sense of occasion.



Two water-colours by J. Roberts: left, David Garrick as Sir John Brute in The Provoked Wife, *and right, David Garrick as Abel Drugger in* The Alchemist.

The illustrations in *The Garrick Stage* are sometimes unhackneyed to a fault. It is a pity not to have vivid old faithfuls like Zoffany's Trial Scene from *The Merchant of Venice* (with Charles Macklin's revolutionary Renaissance-Italian Shylock surrounded by very *dix-huitième* English persecutors), or Wilson's "Lear on the Heath" (David Garrick losing his wits in Hanoverian ermine), or Cipriani's extraordinary icon of Garrick as the British Roscius unveiling a statue of Shakespeare Siamese-twinned with the goddess Nature, which would have epitomized most of the argument of Nicoll's first chapter. Still, some of the least familiar pictures are the most rewarding, notably three oils from Nicoll's own collection, one of them an anonymous interior of Covent Garden in the 1760s, crude but very evocative, with a modern-dress Macbeth, broom-sticked witches, blazing chandeliers and the obligatory grenadiers guarding the stage-doors. And the text surrounding the pictures is stylish, if a bit garrulous, and has sensible things to say about metropolitan and provincial theatre.

In all of it Nicoll follows the golden mean. He will not allow that the Garrick decades were ones of total theatrical stasis, though he admits that many things did not alter; nor does he encourage the idea that the period saw a general revolution, though he does point out the significant number of novelties in these years, novelties "which prophesied a change in theatrical practice . . . an instinctive and only partly conscious breaking away from the family party atmosphere which had hitherto prevailed": the banishing of the public from backstage and the stage itself for instance, the removal of those chandeliers and grenadiers, the drift of the dramatic action away from the forestage and upstage into the scenic area, the boom in scene-design, the use of drop scenes to hide scene changes, the growth of historic costuming, the beginnings of unified décor and even of something like co-ordinated production. As for Roscius himself, Nicoll allows Garrick a natural eminence but does not let us forget his gifted colleagues and reminds us again and again that his great talent was for playing along with the *Zeitgeist*, for adapting the drama's laws to the demands of the drama's patrons.

So far so good. But there is a problem with *The Garrick Stage*, which may well come from its being published posthumously. Nicoll completed the manuscript as it stands not long before his death in his early eighties four years ago, and Sybil Rosenfeld has prepared the text for publication. This has been done unobtrusively and, as far as one can tell, efficiently, with barely a dozen small slips and inconsistencies (though I could wish the index were fuller and that a bibliography had been added). But editor and press have left Nicoll wearing two rather ill-assorted hats. There is Nicoll in the hat of the specialist in visual evidence, writing for a fairly knowledgeable audience. This is the Nicoll who says half a dozen times that such and such a topic or story has been so widely treated or repeated by scholars that he can pass over it quickly, and whose concern is so wholly iconographic that he can explain at one point that "since the primitive and cumbersome systems of admission to the playhouses cannot be pictorially illustrated . . . that subject is deliberately omitted here". But there is also Nicoll in the hat of the freshman's guide writing what he calls a "short general survey", the Nicoll who pitches quite a lot of the book at a very simple level and takes us on several rather jolly time-travelling tours round Georgian playhouses.

It can be bizarre to juxtapose paragraphs by the two Nicolls, but more serious is the fact that as a general survey, the book tends to give short shrift or no shrift at all to many important unvisual things the freshman needs to know: not just systems of admission but also questions of acting style, theatre music, the social standing of the players, the manager's approach to running his playhouse, his relations with authors dead and living, and (not least) the actual plays he presented. The humble beginner will need at least one other introduction of roughly the same kind to complement Nicoll's if he is to get a clear view of the whole subject. The obvious choice is Cecil Price's *Theatre in the Age of Garrick* which Blackwell published in 1973 and which, while not strong on visual evidence or matters of bricks and mortar, is profuse with verbal quotation and full of detail. It is a pity Price and Nicoll did not get together.

Looking for Lilliput

By J. P. Kenyon

F. P. LOCK:

The Politics of Gulliver's Travels

156pp. Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press. £7.50.
0 19 812656 5

When *Gulliver's Travels* was first published, in 1726, most readers took it to be a general satire on modern politics and mores, though even then a few thought it was a direct allegory, like Dryden's *Absalom and Achitopel*, in which the plot, and every character in it, had a direct equivalent in contemporary politics. John Gay told Swift, "The politicians to a man agree, that it is free from particular reflections, but that the satire on general societies of men is too severe. Not but we now and then meet with people of greater perspicuity, who are in search for particular applications in every leaf". "Keys" were in fact issued at the time, but from the first it proved difficult to "fix" the allegory; it was like trying to solve a crossword puzzle in which the words down do not mesh with the words across, though all the clues seem plausible. The identification of "Big-endians" and "Little-endians" with Catholics and Protestants, and "High-heels" and "Low-heels" with Tories and Whigs, is obvious enough, and Flimnap, the Lord High Treasurer of Lilliput, could well be intended as a caricature of Sir Robert Walpole. But, beyond this it is difficult to go, and it is not even clear that the events satirized are those of 1708-10, 1710-14 or 1718-20, or any of them, or whether Gulliver is Oxford or Bolingbroke or both, or whether the Emperor of Lilliput is Queen Anne or George I or neither. Presumably Lilliput is England and Blefuscu France, but that is pretty harmless anyway.

Nevertheless, puzzles have an abiding attraction, there is never a lack of literary mechanics willing to wrench the meaning of a text, and certainly no lack of Gay's "people of greater perspicuity". In this century the arch-villain was Sir Charles Firth, who in a British Academy lecture in 1919 proposed a direct allegorical structure for the *Travels*, and made a host of confident identifications. Skyresh Bolgolam became the Earl of Nottingham, Gulliver Bolingbroke, Redresal Carteret, and so on. Firth's suggestions, couched as *dicta*, were subsequently taken up and elaborated by the distinguished Swiftian editor, Arthur E. Case, who was determined to find a contemporary equivalent for every imaginary character or situation, at least in Lilliput and Brobdingnag. And Case's findings were largely accepted by Swift's most distinguished biographer, Irvin Ehrenpreis.

Unfortunately, Firth's authority to speak on such matters has been exaggerated. Regius professor he may have been, Augustan scholar he was not; his chosen field was the mid-seventeenth, not the early eighteenth century. To the politics of Walpole's day he brought only the superficial expertise of a gifted amateur, and the literary critics who followed him could contribute little more. Moreover, in 1919 the politics of the Augustan period were scarcely understood in any serious sense; Feiling had still to write his history of the early Tory party, Trevelyan his trilogy on Anne's reign. And even since Case wrote in 1945 research has been driven another layer deeper, taking us significantly nearer an understanding of political facts and attitudes as they appeared to Swift and his contemporaries. Thus a trained historian like J. A. Downie (*Year Book of English Studies*, 1977) can casually make mincemeat of most of Firth's and Case's attributions. (Another sceptic is Philip Harth, in *Modern Philology*, 1976).

F. P. Lock is a sceptic, too. He shows that most later attributions are bad in logic as well as fact. The characters can only be made to fit by declaring that some of their attributes are "ironic", but it is impossible to decide which are ironic and which are genuine unless we decide who the character is beforehand. For most characters, and even whole sub-plots, a number of alternative equivalents can be offered, markedly divergent and often contradictory, but equally convincing. In any case, Swift was perfectly capable of producing a direct allegory if he wished, as he did in a satire on the Whig Junto in the *Examiner* in 1710. Some topical allusions there were, of course, but in the main the *Travels* were a general satire on modern politics, in comparison with the ideal. Moreover, many topical allusions—notably the "three ribbons", referring to the Garter, the Thistle and the Bath—were introduced in the second edition, published in Dublin in 1735. The story goes that Swift's London publisher, Benjamin Motte, mangled the text of the first edition in 1726 for fear of prosecution. Lock convincingly argues that this is nonsense, though Swift contributed to the legend by some roguish nonsense of his own. The 1726 edition is simply the original version as Swift conceived it, and the alterations and additions he made in 1735 were not designed to include suppressed material.

But none of these topical allusions are very firm, none of them are pursued in any detail, and none of them are essential to the story. Flimnap, for instance, could be taken as Walpole, and Swift was no doubt happy that he was. But he was also a type of politician, and if Walpole had never lived, no doubt Flimnap would have been much the same. Swift is quite capable of introducing a Mrs Flimnap who cannot be equated with Lady Walpole at all. As for his close colleague, Redresal, who remains largely colourless, there is no reason why he should be either Townshend, or Carteret, or anyone else. The Emperor of Lilliput and the King of Laputa have some of the characteristics of George I, but that was because all three, in Swift's eyes, were bad rulers. To sum up, in Lock's words, "Contemporary politics should be thought of as illustrating Swift's points rather than explaining them".

But if *Gulliver's Travels* is a philosophic construct, "a vision of political wisdom"—and Lock does not hesitate to compare it with Plato's *Republic*—what were its roots? Lock, in fact, begins his book with a full explanation, so that a new edifice is erected, rather confusingly, before the old one is destroyed. Instead of concentrating on Swift's direct experience of politics under the Oxford ministry of 1710-14, a lodestone for previous critics, he addresses himself to his earlier career as secretary and amanuensis to Sir William Temple, from 1689 to 1699. He argues that Temple was a vital influence; from him Swift acquired his philosophic pessimism, and later he came to see his own career as a repetition of his mentor's, a man of deep political wisdom denied, while still in the prime of life, the means of exercising it in his country's service, and now surveying the corruption and stupidity of current politics with melancholy detachment. Also from Temple he took directly an adverse view of the constitution of the Netherlands, and perhaps a certain coolness towards all representative assemblies. Lock points out that in Swift's letters and pamphlets Parliament plays a passive or guided role, even in the crisis of 1713-14; it was something which reflected the views of the Queen or her ministers, and without their control or direction it was lost.

Thus the importance of kings and emperors in Swift's imaginary realms. The King of Brobdingnag is his ideal of the philosopher king, the man of action who is also a man of theory, an unquestioned despot but an unassuming and civilized person. Lock suggests that Swift was drawing on the example of Charles XII, warrior king of Sweden. At first sight the idea is grotesque, but Lock can adduce a considerable amount of circumstantial evidence in support, and even the most sceptical must admit that no other contemporary ruler earned Swift's approval. It is easy, but quite wrong, to fall into the trap of regarding Swift as a politician, as a parliament man, as a believer in the sanctity of public opinion, simply because he was a party pamphleteer. Like most propagandists, he had little but contempt for those he addressed.

Similarly, it is quite unhistorical to suppose that because he was so critical of Walpole, George I, *et al*, that he wanted them under firmer parliamentary control. He wanted a change of men, not measures, and just because he was gifted beyond the ordinary it did not mean that he was in any way forward looking. The "general composition" which had been achieved in Brobdingnag was nothing but a stopping of history's clock; as Lock points out, it was simply "an early renaissance state, freed from the slavery and superstition of the Middle Ages, and yet untroubled" by foreign affairs, war or the discoveries of the new science, to which last Swift was as hostile as any Spanish capuchin. The *Travels* are a sneer, they are a laugh, but they have no lesson to teach. Even Brobdingnag was "not so much a practical scheme for reform in contemporary England as a nostalgic evocation of a vanished golden age".

commentary

Kitchen Agonistes

By Stephen Wall

Early Days
Cottesloe Theatre

A first impression of David Storey's new play might suggest that we are in some home (from *Home*, perhaps) where men live out the evening of their days sitting about on lawns where it seems always afternoon. There have been a good many such incumbents of the rattan chair over the years. It is occupied on this occasion by Sir Richard Kitchen, a faded public figure who was once a man of power, held down several ministries, and was even fancied as a possible premier. You might take him for an Elder Statesman. *Early Days*, however, is not as misleading a title as it might seem because for Kitchen all those years of memoir material are now as though they had never been. What does come back with real force is a childhood memory of a high bridge, with tiny people looking down, and through and beyond the bridge the endless sea. This imagist inset is delivered at the beginning and the end of the play with a lyric intensity all the more piercing for being so clearly an effort to recapture and retain by a man approaching his last grasp.

The only actions that now seem available to Kitchen are more or less reprehensible. He is under constant surveillance by the family, their employees, the local doctor. Walks down to the village end in undesirable and more or less indecent incidents. The telephone is used in an improper manner. Sir Richard persists in regarding one of his attendants as a spy, sent to prise out those secrets of which he no longer retains the haziest notion. He even plans to defect: one of the most haunting passages of the play—haunting, at least, in Sir Ralph Richardson's wonderful voicing of it—tries to picture the Russian village where this fantasy suggests he will end up. The imaginative power of such moments—for which the restraint and economy of Lindsay Anderson's direction provide the best sort of context—is one reason why the old boy seems so sympathetic. His attempts to outflank nature by memory and imagination are after all nothing special: it is what the old do. Storey's work has often been at its best when he has tried to irradiate the ordinary, and he hasn't allowed his hero's celebrity to tempt him into assuming that top people are different. The point is rather that the old, whoever they are, are too like us for comfort. Sir Richard may complain that "people have no regard for age—they see their own destiny too clearly", but it is just such complaints which establish the human community between him and the audience. You can see—at such moments, at any rate—why Storey's work has provoked excitable mentions of Wordsworth.

In this case, however, animal decay has not brought tranquillity. There is a pervasively Shavian tinge in the tone. Kitchen is not prophetic, like Shotover, but he has in common with Shaw's sodden sage a fetching cantankerousness, a wilful readiness to misconstrue, and an adroit ability to wrongfoot the worldly. His granddaughter's aspirations towards revolution seem sketchy compared to the old man's jests at the expense of youth, art, integrity and philosophy. Yet these aphorisms sound more Shavian than they are. Both in their charm and their indiscretion they seem more the last flickers of a spell-binder of the old school. Kitchen himself insists that his political career was effectively killed by a disastrous speech which was too candid about his colleagues' short-comings.

The real life of the play lies in the way that such mildly witty pricks to the mind are juxtaposed with other elements that require no special intelligence to experience or appreciate. Profoundly affecting are the sudden pockets of emotion—particularly associated with memories of the wife whom Sir Richard seems to have treated so badly despite his apparently impassioned defence of marriage—which cause brief episodes of turbulence that are disquietingly close to other tantrums when the old man is obviously hamming it up. Sir Ralph negotiates with calculating but benign subtlety the close relationship in the very old between spontaneous overflows of genuine feelings and melodrama of the most self-indulgent kind. His differentiation between the real and the bogus, whose external signs seem so similar, is masterly. He conveys too, and even more unnervingly, the fitful and failing grip of the senile on the simple phenomena around them: what happened to the doctor? Have the trees moved?

The material that David Storey gives his actor to create such effects with is at all times spare, though not scrupulously mannered as in *Home*, and the play itself is short. Our sense of the human accessibility of the protagonist is certainly enhanced by this terse lack of verbal pretension, even though it also involves a relatively perfunctory treatment of the other characters. We do get a brief poem written by the granddaughter's young man, and considering what a dire effort it is no doubt it is as well that his mind is not extensively explored. Mr Storey, of course, knows that it is feeble (even though its title, "Samson", has a certain resonance in the context), and he is perfectly charitable to Sir Richard's family and interlocutors. They, for their part, appear to put up pretty well with an old chap who may be fascinating in the theatre but who would clearly be hell to live with.

Sir Ralph, on the other hand, we feel we can hardly have too much of, despite his lion's share of the play's lines. It is in itself moving that, nearly sixty years after his first stage appearance in 1921, he should offer us so brave and affecting a performance. David Storey has written for him a part which allows this great actor legitimately to deploy that oddly tangential relationship to reality that has so long been his special quality. The mercurial vivacity, visionary abstraction, genial satire, and brief plunges into anguish are all wonderfully visible in the intimate confines of the Cottesloe, and a text which releases such an exhibition must be of some value. Whether the play's language has enough in it to make it sufficiently available to lesser actors, whether it has the kind of transmittable life that will survive its first animator, it is perhaps early days to tell.

Scoring over the libretto

By Derrick Puffett

Die Liebe der Danae
BBC Radio

Strauss's penultimate opera was broadcast on April 20. It is the least known of the canon; Kempe conducted an English production in 1953, but the work has never been recorded. Strauss had a special affection for it because of its association with Hofmannsthal. In 1920 the poet had proposed the idea of a work combining two Greek myths: that of Zeus, or Jupiter (Strauss preferred the Roman name), appearing to Danae in a shower of gold, and that of Midas. But Strauss was too busy with other projects. The idea was forgotten until 1936, seven years after the poet's death, when Strauss wanted a new libretto. The material was then worked up into a text by his current librettist, Josef Gregor, and the opera was first heard in 1944.

Alas, Gregor was no Hofmannsthal. Norman Del Mar, in his book on Strauss (from which most of these facts are taken), writes amusingly of the confusions which dogged the work's progress. The plot is too complicated to be summarized briefly, but it involves Jupiter disguising himself as Midas and Midas disguising himself as a third party, while Danae, who at the beginning loves gold more than she loves men, ends up renouncing Jupiter's riches in favour of a human love. It is all rather a mess. The idea of Danae's transformation is marvellous, but Danae hardly develops as a character until Act 3, by which time most of the action is over. Midas, too, is a bore (Strauss always had trouble with tenor roles).

Musically, however, the opera is rich. After an introductory scene oddly reminiscent of Weill, an orchestral interlude depicts the golden rain. Immediately we are in the world of the Oboe Concerto and the Duet Concertino, with their diatonic woodwind cascades and unexpected harmonic shifts. The music of this interlude colours all the subsequent action. Pre-echoes of Strauss's late style, for which *Danae* is clearly an important preparation, continue in the next scene, a duet between the heroine and her maid; Danae's "Was Himmels Regen" sounds like the Sonnet in *Capriccio*. Then a march introduces the court, which includes a semi-chorus of four queens, all former lovers of Jupiter. This march takes us straight from the style of *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* to that of the *Capriccio* Laughing Octet: another gap filled in. After a lively ensemble marking the arrival of Midas's ship, Midas himself is a sad let-down. The music stays on this lower level till the end of the act.

Act Two is a succession of Wagnerian situations. Jupiter flirting with his four queens is like Parsifal and the Flower-Maidens; the god's stormy exit, after he has warned Midas not to defy him, recalls Wotan; the Midas-Danae duet is Tristanesque in ending with an interruption, not by a jealous husband but by the lady being turned to gold (the Golden Touch has its drawbacks); and Midas's cries of guilt, when he realizes what he has done, recall Parsifal after being kissed by Kundry. None of the music is as good as the best things in Act One.

The last act—Danae having decided in favour of Midas, and thereby regaining her humanity even as he loses his riches—would be redundant dramatically were it not for the unexpected emergence of the character of Jupiter.

He visits Danae in a last, unsuccessful attempt to win her, and in his farewell to the earth he inspires the noblest music in the opera. There are other riches, too, such as the canon in which the four queens joke tenderly with Jupiter before he takes leave of them. So *Danae* presents a pattern, of a kind familiar in Strauss: a strong first act, a weaker second, and a recovery in the third. Its importance in helping to refine his style has already been noted.

The studio performance incorporated certain transpositions introduced by Clemens Krauss. Arlene Saunders and Norman Bailey headed a strong cast, which included a ravishing quartet of queens. The BBC Opera Chorus and Symphony Orchestra were conducted by Sir Charles Mackerras.

These pitchers is potry

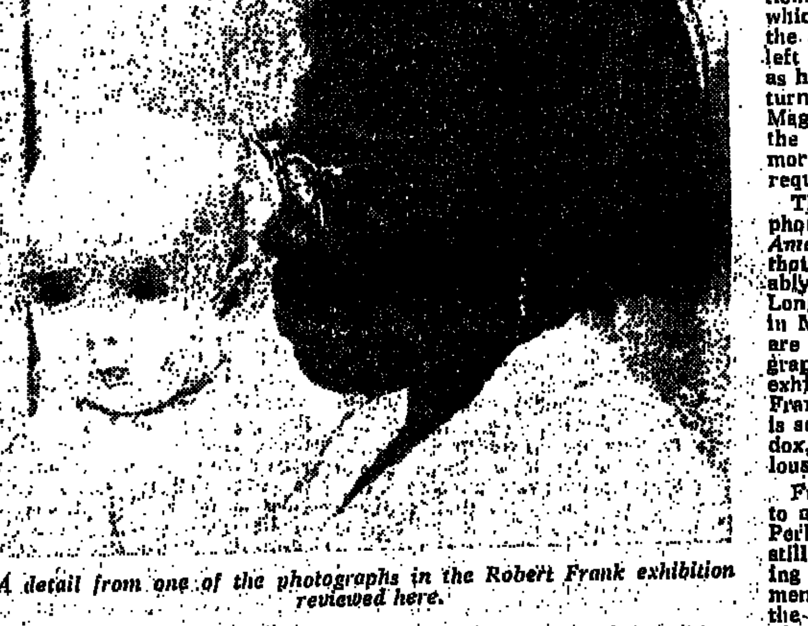
By John Naughton

Photographs by Robert Frank
Upper Gallery ICA.

"Robert Frank, Swiss, unobtrusive, nice, with that little camera he raises and snaps with one hand he sucked a sad poem right out of America onto film, taking rank with the tragic poets of the world." Thus Jack Kerouac in his introduction to Frank's celebrated photographic essay, *The Americans*, first published in 1958. Visitors to the ICA until May 18 have the opportunity of deciding for themselves whether this judgment is characteristic Kerouac hype, or an assessment which survives the test of time. In doing so, they might also ponder why collections of photographs seem to cause writers to lose their marbles, or at least their critical judgment.

Not that one should expect detachment from Kerouac—or almost any other American writer for that matter—in relation to photographs like Frank's. Writers who vigorously maintain that America is "different", that all human life really *is* there, that every imaginable extreme can be found somewhere in the 51 states, that the experimental essences of the society are inaccessible, may be expected to worship images which appear to portray the ineffable.

As indeed do Frank's. To foreigners, his photographs of automobiles—great, bulbous, chrome-plated whales—or of juke boxes, Florida pensioners and luncheonettes, convey aspects of the American Dream



A detail from one of the photographs in the Robert Frank exhibition reviewed here.

which we felt *must* be true, even if they were rarely visible from this side of the Atlantic. Their effect on Americans was understandably traumatic, which is why there was such a furore when the book was first published. And which is also why Kerouac was so excited, perceiving as he did that the shy photographer had been able to communicate what the brash writer could not.

Frank's iconography of the mundane can be interpreted as the visualization of culture shock. Born in Zürich in 1924, he had come to the US relatively late—just after the War. The images which went into *The Americans* can therefore be seen as the reaction of a European sensibility stupefied by the gaudy vulgarity of the new society. Certainly they are radical departures from the retouched fraudulence of much American photography of the time.

Or perhaps they are just reflections of the fierce individualism which, though forcing him to forego the security of magazine work, also left him free to photograph things as he saw them? (It is said that he turned down an invitation to join Magnum because he couldn't stand the prospect of being told to shoot more vertical pictures to meet the requirements of a client).

The present show incorporates photographs mainly from *The Americans* and *Line of my Hand*, though some famous pictures (notably those of the shrouded car at Long Beach and of the elevator girl in Miami Beach) are missing. (Nor are there any explicitly autobiographical pictures.) Nevertheless the exhibition is representative of Frank's concerns and style. The tone is sombre, the composition unorthodox, the people are grizzled, querulous—and sometimes pathetic.

Frank's images do indeed amount to a "sad poem", as Kerouac said. Perhaps this is why he abandoned still photography and took to making films, where at least the gravamen of situations is mitigated by the dynamics of movement. With a nice touch, the ICA are screening two of his films, *Pull My Daisy* (1958) and *Me and My Brother* (1968), at 3 pm on 6-9 May and 13-16 May respectively.

Forthcoming events at the National Poetry Centre, 21 Earls Court Square, London SW5, include readings by Carl Rakosi (May 8), Vicki Feaver (May 13), Yevgeni Vinokurov (May 15), Gavin Ewart (May 20) and Seamus Heaney (May 22).

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Jonathan Cape

On the market

By Helen McNeil

Toulouse-Lautrec Lithographs
Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

The current show of Toulouse-Lautrec's graphic art at the Rijksmuseum (until May 18) displays a world that is for sale. The 150 lithographs and posters, many from the Rijksmuseum's own holdings, comprise about half of Toulouse-Lautrec's complete output from 1891 to his death in 1901. Toulouse-Lautrec is sometimes seen as a naturalist or "historian" (his own term) and sometimes as a decadent, aestheticizing fin-de-siècle low life. But as this well-documented show makes clear, his graphic work was at once decorative and analytic, detached and obsessive. The tendencies are fused by Toulouse-Lautrec's concentration on the momentary gesture and, despite the unsympathetic lithographic medium, by the rendering of light, especially electric stage footlights.

Toulouse-Lautrec's subjects are, without exception, involved in selling themselves. Like the Japanese woodcut artist Utamaro, whose "Courtesan Hitomoto" he copied in "Mlle Lender en buste" (1895), he was fascinated by the relations between pleasure and performance. His subjects—prostitutes, actresses, cabaret artists, and their customers—are seen either with their public or composed so that they give a snapshot-like sense of momentary spirit of place: this is the Moulin Rouge, the Divan Japonais, the Café aux Décadents. The lithographs in particular have an extraordinary sense of the instant. The ephemeral was clearly a theme as well as a compositional mode. From 1893 onwards many of Toulouse-Lautrec's cast of characters (which itself changed rapidly) are shown on stage, drawn in mid-gesture with a photographic immediacy which the photography of the time didn't possess. They are never, however, taken unawares.

In the posters and lithographs of the early 1890s, Toulouse-Lautrec concentrated on colour masses, women's waists, backs and hair, and he composed in repeating linear rhythms which also express an exchange of power or desire. "L'Anglais Warner au Moulin Rouge" (1892), also known as "Flirt", a chair back, the back of La Goulue, and the advancing silhouette of the top-hatted English impresario form a series of parallels. In these "early" prints and in all the mass-production posters, the figures are often blanked out, made up of flat patches of colour, an impression heightened in this lithograph and others by Toulouse-Lautrec's palette of a distasteful, "unnatural" khaki green instead of black for his outline, and black, orange, and yellow for the large areas of colour. The "aesthetic" purples of "Miss Loie Fuller" (1892) are an exception, and even she has a green-lined face.

Throughout, there is a fascination with the gaze. While Utamaro's female subjects seem to have no personalities outside their role as providers of pleasure, Toulouse-Lautrec's men and women are distorted by greed and anxiety, a strain which increases later in the 1890s when he concentrated ever more on the human face. In much Victorian painting, if a man gazes at a woman, *her look is directed down and away*, like that of the woman in Renoir's "The Dance at Bougival". In Toulouse-Lautrec, men and women not only have a complex language of gazes, but the women often fix their customer-victims with a characteristic squinting look. The gimlet-eyed look of Yvette Guilbert was a mannerism, but in "May Belfort au cheveux" (1895) it sums up the contradiction between Belfort's little-girl frock and bonnet and her risqué songs. In the rare "Brandès et Le Bargy dans les 'Cabotins'" (1894), Marthe Brandès's eyes have almost disappeared as she assesses her male victim. Even the top-hat and cane, Toulouse-Lautrec's emblems of masculinity, are compromised; Le Bargy holds the hat protectively in front of his genitals and keeps the cane out of Brandès's sight. Only in the brilliant series "Elles" (1896) are the off-duty prostitutes at rest, and even then they are surrounded by the mirrors and crumpled linen of their trade.

When Toulouse-Lautrec chose lithography and the poster as the art forms of his maturity, he gave away a certain high-cultured cachet in favour of a mass fame. Even though Degas (who deeply resented Toulouse-Lautrec's imitations of his work) had made lithographs and Chéret had made posters before 1890, it was Toulouse-Lautrec who turned the commercial poster into a collectable art form. The Rijksmuseum's inclusion of pre- and post-colouring and lettering versions shows *how meaning is* startlingly altered when line becomes colour, and colour becomes a commercial message: "Le Inge aux mascaron doré" (1894) had a cast list printed on it, and the Zolaesque "Papa pierreuse!" (1893) was a sheet-music cover.

While the Rijksmuseum shows a fine Lautrecian economy by printing an elegant poster (of "Mlle Lender") and only a short pamphlet by Jacqueline Burger, the very fully documented individual prints could use some background at the start of the exhibition. The means of production of lithograph and poster put Toulouse-Lautrec into a world of mass, commercialized art, even if he (unlike many artists now) drew directly on the lithographic stone himself and supervised the printing. By means of production as well as by subject, Toulouse-Lautrec joined that Parisian world where commerce, art, entertainment and sex were mingled.

Toying with terrorism

By Lynne Truss

The Enemy Within
Thorndike Theatre, Leatherhead

After the funeral of a rich great-uncle, a middle-class family assembles in the library of his house in Regent's Park. The family comprises Hilda, in her *mid-seventies*, who runs a socialist press, her companion Bill, her son Stephen, something important at the Treasury, his wife Laura and their children Charles, a moral philosopher at Oxford, Adrian, a ruthless and cynical entrepreneur, and Nancy, who is recovering from anorexia. The family proper is joined by black sheep Tom, who lives in a squat in Wandsworth and who springs from an illegitimate line. Hilda has inherited the house for her own lifetime, so she and Bill move in. In the course of the play, Nancy runs away with Tom and turns terrorist, returning to the house to burgle it, during which episode Bill dies, Nancy and Tom, when released on bail, split up, Charles renounces wealth and goes to seek spiritual peace in Iraq, Nancy announces she is pregnant.

One might conclude from the social position of the family and the terrorist episode that the "enemy within" in Julian Mitchell's new play is to be identified with Nancy. The spoiled middle-class girl, riddled with disgust, violently challenging her family's smug complacency. But such an interpretation requires the rest of the family to share at least some of the assumptions she might hope to undermine, which they do not. Besides, Nancy regards her terrorism more as an experiment in alternative lifestyle. It is the symbolic extension of the "enemy within" that works best: the "monster" inside Nancy that causes her anorexia. She confides, perhaps too readily, that she "spent the whole time plotting how to disrupt his supply lines" because she feared that, if fed, he would burst out of her and "devour the world". Clearly her contented attitude to pregnancy at the end of the play, her eagerness to eat, is supposed to represent a coming to terms with herself, but the catalystic experience of sex, perhaps—is rather obscure.

The enemy within this play is its insistent political dimension, which keeps demanding attention it does not deserve and which has the detrimental effect of limiting all its characters to their attitudes to *property*. Tom, an overtly rather than implicitly politically-motivated character, is unsuccessful because his creator can only see him in terms of a contradiction: his resentment at middle-class intrusion into workers' movements is undermined by his not being a worker himself. As in Mitchell's earlier play *Half-Life*, there are easy points scored against characters who declare principles which they contradict by their actions.

The play is denominated a comedy, but there is no sustained comic tone; just a few good lines. There are some unfortunate too-clever puns, usually at the expense of Adrian (Denis Lawson), who met total silence on the first night when he replied to Tom's declaration "I wouldn't take a penny of his if he came crawling" with, "I never have come crawling. Is it good?" But Bill, played by George Pravda, is a good comic character.

The most consistently sympathetic figure is Hilda (Margery Mason). She is forceful, witty and quite ruthless in her contempt for her weaknesses. But as character she shrinks in comparison with Noel Cunliffe, the protagonist of *Half-Life* who is allowed to learn and to grow, to achieve some portion of self-recognition. The most we get in this play are a few confessions of weakness. Laura (Ruth Goring) complains of her intellectual inferiority and Stephen (John Woodnutt) gives a moving description of the fear implanted in him at public school. Charles, played by Rupert Frazer in a suitably preoccupied manner, is so devoted to coming to terms with himself that any sympathy for his endeavour would be superfluous. Nancy and Tom are supposed to know themselves, but Eleanor Davis and Gerard Murphy seem as uncomfortable in the roles as if they would have liked more to go on.

In a programme note, the director Mark Cullingham writes that he was attracted to *The Enemy Within* because he saw the family as "an image of the Nation today". The play's main weakness is its reliance on such an extension of its significance, which it is not strong enough to sustain. And taken as a drama of relationships between people it fails because the people are not sufficiently interesting.

An unboastful see-hear

By Alan Young

Bunting at Eighty: a Celebration
Arts Centre, University of Warwick

Basil Bunting was eighty years old in March. The initiative to hold a poetry festival to celebrate the occasion of his birthday came from Tom Pickard, writer-in-residence for this year at the University of Warwick. His idea was taken up enthusiastically by a small group of students who, with help from teachers in the department of English, worked hard at the University Arts Centre throughout the weekend of April 26 to 27.

Bunting has insisted that "poetry, like music, is to be heard", and the weekend was therefore dominated by poetry readings. Barry MacSweeney, Jeff Nuttall, Eric Mottram, Thomas Clark, Gael Turnbull, Bob Cobbing and Tom Pickard all read or "performed" from their works. Bunting's delight in music also brought in Allen Hull, singer and songwriter with the Northumbrian group Elvidisfarne. Pleasing and interesting as most of these supporting acts were, top billing was rightly reserved for Basil Bunting's own readings of *The Spoils* and *Briggflatts*.

Bunting has the robust presence in physique and voice of a man twenty years his junior, and his reading of *Briggflatts* was a revelation. Words observed for Richard *Hatts* reading Bunting is certainly a

to life by the strong rhythmic cadences of his delivery. Sonatas by Domenico Scarlatti, played on the harpsichord by Rowland Cotterill, preceded and followed *Briggflatts*. They illuminated particularly one well-known lyrical section of Part IV of the poem: "It is time to consider how Domenico Scarlatti/condensed so much music into so few bars/with never a crabbed turn or congested cadence,/never a boast or a see-here . . ." Bunting's performance came very close to this lyrical ideal, except that it is extremely difficult for a poet who looks and sounds like an authentic bard to be anything but the centre of attention.

Bunting is right: the sounds of *Briggflatts*, properly struck, do help the meaning of the poem come across, and this makes one hesitate to judge that the whole will never have meaning. The new recording of Bunting's reading of *Briggflatts* recently produced by Bloodaxe Books (available from 1 North Desmond Avenue, Jesmond, Newcastle-Upon-Tyne at £4.50) is therefore particularly welcome: one can listen to this remarkably wrought work until its shapes do become clearer and its meanings interlaced.

It is not certain that Bunting is (as the Festival organizers claim) the greatest of our living poets; and it is surely untrue that he is our "most senior poet"—Robert Graves, Edgell Rickword, and several others have precedence there.

But on the evidence of his *Briggflatts* reading Bunting is certainly a

be asked at once to record those poems with whom he has acknowledged affinities, including Spenser's, Wordsworth's, and Chaucer's. I know of no other reader who can combine such craggy strength and lyric tenderness. Perhaps the most moving part of the whole performance last Sunday was the short "coda" which Bunting added to Briggflatts in 1965:

A strong song tows
us, long earsick.
Blind, we follow
rain slant, spray flick
to fields we do not know.

Night, floor us.
Offshore wind, shout,
ask the sea
what's lost, what's left,
what horn sunk,
what crown adrift.

Where we are who knows
of kings who sup
while day falls? Who,
swinging his axe,
to felt kings, guesses
where we go.?

An exhibition called "The New Managers" is being mounted by the Museum of Bristol Theatre Collection at the Coopers' Hall, Bristol, from May 13. The Theatre Collection is the repository of the theatrical archives, and this show has been put together from important material connected with Sir Henry Irving and one of the managers he most influenced, Sir John Martin-Harvey. Many of the items to be displayed have never been exhibited in public before.

Images from a lost world

By Nick Roddick

The Mirror
Camden Plaza

Andrei Tarkovsky's *The Mirror* is, as the British poster tells us, a long awaited film. Suppressed in Russia, it has taken five years to get to London and it arrives with a distinct whiff of dissidence about it. It is a whiff which needs to be dispelled: *The Mirror* is cinematically dissident, but not politically. Its sin was that it was "elitist" (an epithet which Tarkovsky enthusiastically embraces), and its suppression consisted of two things: consignment to "Category Three" (limited distribution, few prints, no returns to the filmmaker) and refusal to let it represent the USSR at Cannes. It is not hard to think of British films which have been "suppressed" in that sort of way.

The Mirror is a kind of patchwork: visual and aural elements whose sequence and structure are determined by internal rhymes and not by a chronology which precedes and thus supersedes them. The film consists of scenes from public and private memory—newsreel, childhood recollections, dream sequences—over a period of ten years (1935-1945), plus a few scenes set in the present. The distinction between public and private is deliberately blurred, and Tarkovsky has spoken of *The Mirror*'s meaning as being like the springs of a sofa—hidden but necessary: if they stick out, you can't sit on it. The sofa in question is pretty clearly autobiographical, but the director himself is not the springs, or at any rate not all of them. It is the autobiography of someone Tarkovsky's age, a Russian childhood and adolescence during the Stalinist era and the war: the individual become archetype.

The Mirror is a memory-film, and the important thing about memory, as Marguerite Duras once remarked, is not the event remembered, it is "me remembering": the past is recreated and reorganized in the present, of which it thus becomes part. The organizer in this case is Alexel, the narrator, whose face is never seen. The memories, however, are not exclusively private: Tarkovsky has stressed that the film's events are clearly understandable to a Russian viewer (the British viewer who needs help can consult Herbert Marshall's article in *Sight and Sound*, Spring 1976.) Nearly every sequence follows the same pattern: a memory-event triggered by and reconstructed from a single, luminous image which ends the sequence and which, for the viewer, becomes the icon of that event (as the final icons of *Andrei Rubley* encapsulated the experience of all that preceded them). Paradoxically, it is a simple film—radically simple in terms of denotation, extraordinarily dense in terms of connotation.

An example: left alone in his father's apartment, Alexei's son Ignat finds an old woman being served tea by the window. She tells him to read her a passage from a book (a letter written by Pushkin in 1837 about what it means to be Russian). The doorbell rings: an old woman who says she has the wrong house. When Ignat returns the first old lady has gone, but on the table a little circle of condensation left by her hot teacup slowly disappears. The old lady was there at the table, in history (she existed), in the film (we saw her), and she has left her trace in both. The sequence's meaning, if we choose to give it one (and it certainly has one, since Pushkin's words about Russian-ness are bound up in the imagery of the film), comes after, not during: the sofa remains sittable on.

The Mirror is memorable above all for its images (the ring of condensation, or the shooting instructor's head-wound; the sudden wave of wind that pursues the doctor across the corn field, or a shot held on an outdoor table from which children have been chased by a storm until the precise moment when the chimney of an oil lamp topples and falls); but these images are not random: they are integrated, first into a film which has its own logic, its own syntax; and secondly into a collective consciousness of a Russian childhood. Tarkovsky's *Mirror* is flawed here and there, but it remains what it set out to be: a simple film.

He approaches the memories of childhood through newsreel as much as reconstruction. The newsreel images are not the expected ones—they have the same sense of strangeness and half-comprehension that Fellini brought to the "science-fiction Rome" of *Satyricon* and which Tarkovsky himself brought to the earth-seen-from-space of *Solaris*. "Halfway through my earthly life", declares the director's father, Arseny Tarkovsky, whose poems punctuate the film, "I lost my way in a gloomy forest". *The Mirror* is composed of images from that forest, observed but not explained. At the end, the camera tracks away from a glowing summer vision of happiness into the darkening wood. It is (as was, incidentally, the end of *Satyricon*) a graceful and wistful withdrawal from a lost world, and a story that cannot be finished.



"Portrait of P. A. Chikhachev, the Geologist and Geographer", pencil and watercolour (the trousers are a vivid red) c 1835, by Karl Briullov (1799-1852). The picture is Lot 31 in a sale of Russian paintings, drawings, watercolours and sculptures at Sotheby's on May 14. Among the many other artists whose work is being sold are Adolph Ladurner, Vassili Surikov, Nicholas Roerich and Leonid Pasternak. Briullov himself, a versatile painter of society portraits, was a student at the St. Petersburg Academy under Sokolov and studied in Rome and Naples.

In the shallows of Hampstead ponds

By Patricia Beer

Sweet William
Classic Cinema, Haymarket

A departure by air and the consequent farewells at airport or terminal can be adequately imagined from the printed page, but in Claude Whatham's film of Beryl Bainbridge's *Sweet William* these scenes, the opening ones, are more than adequate, they are aurally stunning: the roaring, the clanging, the plug-ling, the bellish voice calling. Ann (Jenny Agutter) is saying goodbye to her fiancé (Tim Pigott-Smith), who is on his way to a teaching appointment in America. It is an acrimonious parting, though when it is too late and they are out of sight of each other, both hesitate and turn round, which is more than they do in the book. Bainbridge explains that Ann is acting out the fantasy of having been betrayed, a useful comment in view of what follows.

We see Ann coming out of Finchley Road tube station on the way to her flat in Arkwright Road and the scene now closes in. Such Hampstead residents as we meet—for example, Mrs Kershaw, Ann's landlady (Rachel Bell)—are convinced that they live in a different world, and indeed they do, though it is not the wide, liberal world of their complacent imaginings but a lumpy dog-basket where they do not seem able to lie comfortably.

Hampstead is photographed brilliantly and surely satirically: Louis's cakes banked up theatrically in all their gloss and colour, the Post Office (verisimilitude is temporarily shaken by the speed with which the hero buys a stamp), the Royal Free, the leafy roads which enable people to materialize and vanish like Ariel, and the horses which come down Frognal at half-past seven in the morning, something which most residents hear but hardly ever see—and probably never see while standing naked on their balconies.

Mrs Kershaw, from the shallows of her self-satisfaction, describes Ann's mother, Mrs Walton (Daphne Oxenford), as a very ordinary woman. She is not; she is exceptionally dreadful; narrow-minded, dirty-minded, and much more interesting than Mrs Kershaw. When Ann gets home she is there in the flat, straining sanctimoniously, reading Ann's letters and preparing to return to Brighton, to her house and husband (Arthur Lowe: a haunting performance, though as far from the Captain Walton of the book as could be), in a huff brought on by the overheard lovemaking of Gerald and Ann the night before, especially the grunting.

Ann now meets William, at the Harvest Festival of the school attended by Mrs Kershaw's children and his own. In looks, Sam Waterston who plays William is the exact opposite of Bainbridge's description, but then so is Tim Piggott-Smith as Gerald, and as long as the two are completely dissimilar physically the plot can go on. From here the story is an account of William's affair with Ann and her growing and most painful awareness of his simultaneous relations with her cousin Pamela (Geraldine James), Mrs Kershaw, his second wife Edna (Anna Massey) and many presumed others.

An irresistible man is hard to depict. Bainbridge does it by sleight-of-hand, making his victims deprived women. Their deprivation is not obtrusive, yet if they had been rich, involved in their work or emotionally fulfilled they would hardly have been impressed by this twopenny-halfpenny Lothario whose cheap tricks are as mercenious as the plays he writes. Yet in his current play, witheringly illustrated, seems to be successful, so perhaps the impresarios are deprived too.) The film has the advantage that showing must have over telling: William's soppy lady-killing smile, at such moments of outstanding duplicity as when he boards the train at Crewe, would win a terrible beauty competition.

Beryl Bainbridge wrote the screenplay, and the expert dialogue comes across intact. When author's comment has to be transferred to one of the characters for the sake of clarity, it is smoothly contrived. The novel's accuracy of social detail is re-created in terms of the film, from the women's clothes, all excellent, to the domestic equipment of the Brighton house: for example, the electric carver that cuts chippy little pieces off the Christmas turkey, not proper slices.

Cliché sometimes creeps into the film: the piano-playing schoolteacher at the Harvest Festival, the joggers on the Heath. But many of its inventions are welcome, such as the couple out for a walk who, happening to witness Ann's hysterical rush into one of the Hampstead ponds pursued, not too fast, by William, stand apparently wondering what the trendy reaction to such circumstances would be.

The ending of the film, though it legitimately develops strong hints in the original book, is altogether more affirmative than that of the novel. The smile on the heroine's face as she holds her newborn son has replaced the baby's wailing. William, having put in an appearance at the birth, has finally gone, but that is not the only good news.

Oxford University Press

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to the editor

Finland and 'Snobs' Island'

Sir,—Peter Lewis's review of Henrik Tikkanen's *Snobs' Island* (April 18), like the book itself, spreads ethnic prejudice against the Finland-Swedes. Your reviewer should have checked before he passed Tikkanen's fiction on as fact.

In the review the Finland-Swedes are depicted as an upper class in Finland. This is incorrect. The social structure of the Swedish-speaking population in Finland is the same as that of the Finnish-speaking one. In fact, there are indications that the Finland-Swedes are somewhat less wealthy on average than the Finnish-speaking Finns—emigration, for instance, is several times higher from the Swedish-speaking areas than from the Finnish-speaking ones.

The Finland-Swedes are a *territorial* minority, living in four distinct provinces: Nyland, the Aland Islands, Aboland and Ostrobothnia. During earlier centuries the Swedish language was used by the upper class, of whatever ethnic origin—Finnish, Finland-Swedish, Swedish, Continental, Baltic, Jewish, etc—but this has little to do with the Finland-Swedes.

As to a second point, Finland's "leaving been on the side of Nazi Germany", I would like to point out that it was the Russians who were allies of Germany when they invaded Finland in 1939 and occupied Karelia. During the 1930s fascism was on the increase in Finland and in fascist opinion "strangers" had no right to exist. At that time people of Tikkanen's sort falsely depicted the Finland-Swedes as strangers, who had come late to the country. Today socialism is on the increase in Finland and in socialist opinion "capitalists" have no right to exist. Accordingly people of Tikkanen's sort falsely depict the Finland-Swedes (all 300,000 of them) as capitalists. It is obvious that ethnic prejudice against the Finland-Swedes will always be able to adapt to whatever is the ruling ideology.

RALF NORRMAN.
6 Bradmore Road, Oxford OX2 6QN.

Cannibals

Sir,—Apropos of the recent letters about the ethical and culinary aspects of cannibalism, may I quote from a book I wrote years ago, *The Traveller's Tree*, about the Antilles? As it is all cribbed from French seventeenth-century travellers, this can be done without a blush. As we know, the Caribs invaded the Caribbean chain in pre-Columbian times, eating all the male Arawaks they could lay hands on and marrying their widows. Père Labat, the omniscient Dominican monk was offered "the arm of an Englishman, very civilly, whom they had killed in a recent raid on Barbuda. The Caribs, he said, in spite of their bad reputation, devoured their victims as a warlike ceremonial, or in a rage, never out of sheer gluttony. But his compatriot, de Rochefort, writing a few decades earlier, says that the Caribs of his day had decided and discriminating views in the matter. French people were considered delicious, and by far the best of the Europeans, and next came the English. The Dutch were dull and rather tasteless while the Spaniards were so stringy and full of gristle as to be practically uneatable." (The order is predictable, though perhaps tinged with nationalism.)

"The taste of Arawaks had been forgotten long ago and their own was thought too commonplace to warrant a mention. The victims were prepared alive by stuffing slits down the back and sides with pimentos and other herbs. Despatched with a mace, they were trussed to poles and roasted over a medium fire, while the women turned and basted, catching the lard in gourds and calabashes which they allowed to set and stored away. . . . Often the meat was half-roasted, then half-boiled. Some of the meat was eaten on the spot, the rest was cut up and smoked and put prudently by for lean or unpatriotic times.

"But there was a symbolic aspect to these banquets. They set the seal on victory and put it beyond question. De Rochefort reports that a Carib prisoner, while being made ready, would jeer at his captors, saying that although they would soon be eating him, he had already swallowed so many of their family or tribe that they would be virtually eating one of their own people. This kind of language would continue until the final blow was delivered. It never failed to exasperate the company and to cast an atmosphere of dejection over the whole meal."

There is a vivid and detailed description of a more up-to-date though interrupted Central African cannibal feast in *From Cape to Cairo* by Grogan and Sharp, which appeared in the early years of this century.

PATRICK LEIGH FERMOR.
Kardamyli, Messenia, Greece.

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The Future of the Wiener Library

Sir,—As one of the many who have greatly benefited from his work at the Wiener Library, I read Professor D. C. Watt's letter (April 11) with great interest. The fact that the Wiener Library had grave financial problems and that it received little help from individuals or institutions in Britain was known in Ann Arbor thousands of miles away. Professor Watt wants me to believe that it was not known in London, which I find incredible. I would appear, to use an Inelegant American phrase, that Professor Watt and his friends "did not put their influence and their money where their mouth is", and even at this late stage seem to prefer polemics to practical help.

J. REINHARZ.
Department of History, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104.

Sir,—In his long letter (April 18) Walter Laqueur, the Director of the Wiener Library, once more omits to answer the pertinent question, repeatedly put to him: why must the books, assembled in the Wiener Library since 1933, be sent to Tel Aviv and only microfilms be kept in London? As, in Professor Laqueur's words, the Library "shall continue to operate from 4 Devonshire Street", would it then not be far more reasonable to keep the books here and send the microfilms to Tel Aviv, as suggested by David Kessler, the former Chairman of the Library's Executive Committee (see his letter in *The Times*, April 19)?

J. W. BRUEGEL.
21 Connaught Drive, London NW11 6BL.

Sir,—The interesting correspondence in your columns regarding the Wiener Library has not thrown the spotlight on one important fact—the state of preservation of the documents themselves.

This company was given the task of filming the contents of the library—nearly 100,000 books and well over one million press cuttings. Much of the material was obviously intended to be ephemeral, much was printed during the war on inferior paper stock or by underground process. Consequently many of the documents are now extremely fragile and needed great care in handling even to allow microfilming.

The result of microfilming the collection means that all the documents can be seen and duplicate copies of the entire library will be maintained in Germany and America.

Having seen the original documents which will be removed to Tel Aviv it is clear to me that access to many of them would have had to have been restricted whether they had remained or not. Microfilming them has meant that full access can be maintained to the complete library wherever copies are kept.

MICHAEL K. DAVIES.
Bell and Howell Ltd, Micromedia Division, Telford Road, Bicester, Oxford OX6 0UP.

Christian Monasticism

Sir,—May I remind your reviewer Peter Hebblethwaite, that the Christian monastic movement started in the third century (if we accept, as I do, the historicity of St Antony and the probable existence of Paul of Thebes, even if we know virtually nothing about him) and not, as he suggests in his review of Rowan Williams's *The Wound of Knowledge* (April 25), in the fourth century? The point is more than mere pedantry, because it suggests that monasticism can be seen, not only or even primarily as a revolt against the Constantinian settlement, but rather as a movement which helped to canalize and contain a very powerful strain of ascetic which had always been present in the pre-Nicene Church, but which had never succeeded in gaining universal control, and which was plainly intolerable if the Church were to be anything more than a minority movement (like Montchrestin) in the Roman world. The really interesting consideration is the degree to which monasticism, which essentially appealed to a few heroic souls, contrived over many centuries to condition the piety of so many non-ascetics. Whether this was a desirable phenomenon or not is a matter of opinion, but the fact cannot reasonably be denied, and must be of great importance for any historian of spirituality.

GERALD BONNER.
Department of Theology, University of Durham, Abbey House, Palace Green, Durham DH1 3RS.

The Elephant Man

Sir,—The portrait of a seventeenth-century predecessor of Joseph Merrick (*The True History of the Elephant Man*, March 28) is still to be seen above the doorway to the bell-tower of S Maria Formosa in Venice: "that head in which", su Conskin thought, "is embodied the type of the evil spirit to which Venice was abandoned". More soberly, Alfonso Lowe, in his *La Serenissima* (1974), calls it "the accurate representation of a diseased model, one who suffered from neurofibromatosis, or von Recklinghausen's disease", and makes the interesting suggestion that it was put there to ward off the Evil Eye, although I can think of no other example in Venice, and certainly not on a church. The sculptor's name is unknown.

F. HURDIS-JONES.
35 Square Marguerite, 1040 Brussels.

Book Prices

Sir,—I am afraid it is true that, as Gabriel Austin points out (April 18), books originated, printed and published in the United Kingdom are frequently a little cheaper in their American editions. Some factors that help to explain this anomaly are: the American market is larger; American prices, in particular for hardbacks, are lower than ours; the relative weakness of the dollar against sterling.

We are, for example, frequently able to sell the Gates 3,000 copies of a book for which the small British and Commonwealth demand will be less than 1,000. As the American publisher would swiftly be obliged to remainder the book were he to operate a simple conversion of the selling price into dollars, he must demand and, because of the economies of scale thus achieved, will usually be able to obtain extremely favourable terms from the British publisher. For, if we ceased to sell our books competitively on the American market, they would be, because of the lower print runs, yet more expensive.

The need to make marginal P on American deals will be ne by the present rate of Amo inflation. I hope so. British sellers and library suppliers otherwise think it worthwhile bypass trade agreements and import the cheaper Americ tions of British books.

J. C. A. DAVIS
5 Alfred Street, Oxford OX

Ezra Pound and Wyndham Lewis

Sir,—I would be grateful to from anyone who has or k about pertinent material for authorized edition of the L Pound—Wyndham Lewis co pondence.

TIMOTHY MATHEWS
Department of English, Univer of Missouri, Columbia, Miss 65211.

The Infertility of Quinces

Sir,—John Montague's mo on the infertility of quince butes this to monoecism (Ti April 4). *Cydonia* is, however, cious. The poem is valuable another reason since it illustr that poets are not sufficiently fa liar with facts to attempt to la conclusions upon their happen I would suggest that Montague an experimental gardener and s to poetry about stuff like lea other emotional material not su to factual verification.

FRED A. METTLER
Pippin Hill, Blairstown, New J sey 07825.

Hubert Nicholson

Sir,—Your columns have rec included correspondence about poem "Nero" (Letters, March correctly identified by John H Nicholson, at seventy-plus, is a and well and still writing. He recently published a new collec of his poems, entitled *Ventrilo and Dolls*.

JOHN BISHOP
Autolycus Publications, 31 & Road, London W10 6AR.

David Butler and Anne Sloman *British Political Facts*, 1900-1 reviewed in the *TLS* of April is published in a paperback ed by Macmillan (£8.95. 0 333 2929

Leopold Stokowski: A Profile Abraham Chasins (reviewed in *TLS* of March 7) was published earlier this year by Hawthorn Boo A British edition of this book is to be published in autumn by Robert Hale.

'The Scandal of Syrie Maugham'

Sir,—In March, 1978, a gentleman, previously unknown to me, named Mr Gerald McKnight, wrote to me and asked if I would see him and give him what information I could about Mrs Syrie Maugham, the wife of Somerset Maugham. I thought it wise to see him so that I could testify that certain allegations made against Mrs Maugham were baseless. When we met I advised him to abandon the project, as he seemed to know little or nothing about Mrs Maugham or the circle or times in which she had lived; and I told him two anecdotes to prove that the Maughams' marriage had been a tragedy not to be treated lightly.

Mr McKnight has now sent me the results of his refusal to take my advice: *The Scandal of Syrie Maugham*, published by Messrs W. H. Allen (reviewed in the *TLS* of April 25). I wish to express my considerable distaste for this work, though I will own with gratitude that he has realized the tragedy of the Maugham marriage and some of the difficulties of Mrs Maugham's life. But I dislike this book very much, not least for its ceriphoenny title, and its misuse of most of the material I gave Mr McKnight.

I appear throughout the book as dispensing gossip in a vulgar and illiterate manner; and what is surprising is that much of the gossip was entirely unknown to me till I turned Mr McKnight's pages. I am alleged to have told Mr McKnight how Syrie had related to me that she had married Mr Wellcome, her first and uncongenial husband, because she had earlier been crossed in love. She had fallen in love with a young man who had hailed from West Ham, but had not been allowed to marry him until a certain period had elapsed. During the period of waiting Syrie had found he had prudently neglected to get rid of his mistress, and she broke off the engagement. Mr McKnight's comment reads: "Her mother was determined to make the best match foreseeable for her only eligible daughter; and the strength she brought to this design can be imagined."

In fact, Syrie Maugham told me quite a different story, and I relayed this as I heard it to Mr McKnight. She thought it quite reasonable that her parents should have forbidden the marriage till after delay, for she was still a schoolgirl. The breaking of the engagement was entirely her own idea, and from first to last she uttered no word of complaint against her parents; and however ambitious her parents might have been regarding her marriage, I do not see they would have had any reason to object to the suitor. Mr McKnight is mistaken in saying I thought the young man came from West Ham. What Syrie told me was that he had, some time after the engagement, been thrown by a horse on Ham Common.

The comic effects of this confusion are discounted by the fact that he died some months later. This incident was quite clear in the mind of one of my family who was living at Richmond at the time, and who has been able to identify him as the son of quite prosperous people living in Richmond, near the house inhabited by Miss Braddon, the author of *Lady Audley's Secret*. Had Mrs Barnado wished for a good marriage for her daughter, this was surely it.

On page 39 of *The Scandal of Syrie Maugham*, I am represented as having told Mr McKnight that Sir Ronald Storrs had told me that Mr Wellcome beat his young wife. This is not what he told me. What he said, as I told Mr McKnight, was that Horatio Bottomley had published in his weekly paper *John Bull* allegations that Mr Wellcome had beaten the guards on an archaeological site he had rented in Egypt: Mr McKnight alleges that I told him that this journalistic enterprise "was followed by a libel action, I believe, which was settled out of court". This is the first I have ever heard of such a court action.

On pages 57 and 58, Mr McKnight represents me as making a series of statements about an alleged love affair between Mrs Maugham and Mr Selfridge, the founder of the department store. I am supposed to have assured him that such a relationship had existed and that Syrie had told me all about it, and that later an ex-son-in-law of Selfridge, a Vicomte de Segur, "had spent an entire Atlantic crossing talking to my husband and myself about it". In fact, the name of Mr Selfridge never came into any conversation I had with Syrie during our entire acquaintance, and I mentioned the name of Vicomte de Segur to Mr McKnight only when I was telling him that a very charming ex-son-in-law of Selfridge of that name was the only person connected with the Selfridges whom I had ever met, and that he made no mention of any member of the family during our pleasant transatlantic friendship.

On page 67, Mr McKnight alleges that I described Gerald Haxton's "continual drunkenness" as "disgusting". As I do not remember ever having seen Gerald Haxton drunk, this leaves me startled; but not so much startled as I was when I read that Miss XY, the daughter of the Chief Rabbi of New York, "paid his gambling debts and kept him in style" (odious phrase). "I should think he was capable of anything." I did not know Miss XY well myself, but she was a friend of a friend of mine (she was not the daughter of the Chief Rebbi of New York). I never knew that Gerald Haxton had any gambling debts, or would have troubled my mind to know if he had.

I do not know where Miss XY, or anybody else, could have "kept him in style" as he lived in Maugham's villa until the Second World War, during which he died in America, nor do I know whether Miss XY had the means to maintain them. I mentioned only as a friend of Haxton since their extreme youth, who had visited the Maugham villa to see him and had, I thought, made him feel homesick for America; a possibility which had made me realize how extremely useful to Maugham he was as an efficient secretary.

I beg your forgiveness for making such a considerable demand on your space, but I feel that I would like to make it clear that Mr McKnight has quite often in this volume wholly misunderstood what I said to him, and that I often find it difficult to accept what Mr McKnight tells me on other people's authority. For example, I did not find Mrs Maugham's mother, the widow of Dr Barnado, anything like as strange as some of his informants seem to have done, and I suppose I met her half a dozen times. Nor did I find Mrs Maugham silent about the son of her first marriage, whom she often mentioned to me with concern. I informed Mr McKnight fully of my incredulity on these points. I do not understand why biographers do not find it right and natural to submit their work before publication to the people who have given them information to see if they have rightly heard and rightly understood it.

REBECCA WEST.
48 Kingston House North, Prince's Gate, London SW7.

Peter Huchel

Sir,—Considering that, in your issue of April 11, Daniel Johnson goes rather out of his way to describe Michael Hamburger's translations of Peter Huchel as less than perfect, it seems fair to inquire how Mr Johnson himself arrives at "iced-up buoys" in his rendering of Huchel's line about death, *der auf vereisten Flössen wohnt*. A *Floss* is a raft, while the German for buoy is *Boje*, and the imperfection consequent on confusing the two is anything but trivial in this instance. A wrenching metaphor is substituted for a much calmer one, and the scene evoked by the line is shifted from a setting well inland to a coastal one.

ENGLEBERT KIRCHNER.
36 Grove Street, New York, NY10014.

TheodoreWratislaw

Sir,—It would be absolutely phenomenal for Theodore Wratislaw, "a minor, if not miniscule poet" of the 1890s, to have written a homosexual poem at the age of two! That is what your reviewer, Allan Rodway, would lead us to believe in his review of Wratislaw's *Oscar Wilde: A Memoir* (April 11).

However, Wratislaw was born in 1871 and the poem, "To a Sicilian Boy", appeared in *The Artist* in August 1893, not 1873. Alas, Mr Rodway was the innocent victim of a typographical error, now corrected, but he should have been more alert to Wratislaw's date of birth in the Introduction, of which I am the author.

KARL BECKSON.
Department of English, Brooklyn College of the City University of New York, Bedford Avenue and Avenue H, Brooklyn, New York 11210.

Among this week's contributors

PAUL ADDISON is the author of *The Road to 1945*, 1975.

ALBERTO ARBASINO's most recent book is *Un paese senza*, 1979.

ROSEMARY ASHTON's *The German Idea: Four English Writers and the Reception of German Thought 1800-1860*, will be reviewed shortly in the *TLS*.

JACK BEVAN is the translator of the Penguin *Selected Poems* of Salvatore Quasimodo, 1965.

PATRICIA BEER's books include *Driving West*, 1975, and *Moon's Ottery*, 1978.

MARTIN BLUMENSON is the author of *Clarlan and Crisis in Spain, 1931-1939*, 1975.

RONALD BLYTHE's most recent book is *The View in Winter*, 1979.

CARL BRIDENBAUGH's books include *The Spirit of '76*, *The Growth of American Patriotism before Independence, 1607-1776*, 1976.

P. V. CARDEN is Masaryk Professor of Central European History at the University of London.

MARTIN CLARK's *Antonio Gramsci and the Revolution that Failed* was published in 1978.

STEFAN COLLINI is the author of *Liberalism and Sociology*, 1978.

JOHN A. DAVIS is a lecturer in History at the University of Warwick.

FILIPPO DONINI was Director of the Italian Institute in London until 1972.

GAVIN EWART's *The Collected Ewart* will be published in June.

ROY FOSTER is the author of *Charles Stewart Parnell: the Man and his Family*, 1976.

CHRISTOPHER R. HILL is Director of the Centre for Southern African Studies at the University of York.

J. F. KENYON's books include *Revolution Principles*, 1977, and *Stuart England*, 1978.

STEPHEN KOSS's books include *Asquith*, 1976.

JOHN LAHR's biography of Joe Orton, *Prick Up Your Ears*, was published in 1978.

HELEN MCNEIL is a lecturer in the School of English and American Studies at the University of East Anglia.

MICHAEL MALLETT's *Mercenaries and their Masters* was published in 1974.

DENIS MACK SMITH's books include *Mussolini's Roman Empire*, 1967.

PATRICK MCCARTHY is the author of *Céline*, 1975.

NICHOLAS MANN is a Fellow of Pembroke College, Oxford.

ALASTAIR NIVEN is Director General of the Africa Centre, London.

J. H. PLUMB was Professor of Modern English History at the University of Cambridge from 1965 to 1974.

RONALD PICKVANCE is Professor of Fine Arts at the University of Glasgow. His *Degas '79* was published last year.

DERRICK PUFFETT is a Fellow of Wolfson College, Oxford.

DAVID ROBEY is a lecturer in Italian at the University of Oxford.

ROGER SAVAGE is a senior lecturer in English Literature at Edinburgh University.

VERNON SCANNELL's *Not Without Glory: Poets of the Second World War* was published in 1976.

PRUE SHAW is a lecturer in German at Bedford College, London.

GLEB STRUVE's books include *Russian Literature 1917-50*, 1951.

R. C. S. WALKER's *Kant* was published in 1978.

STEPHEN WALL is a Fellow of Wadham College, Oxford, and editor of *Essays in Criticism*.

STUART WOOLF's *A History of Italy 1700-1860: The Social Constraints of Political Change* was published last year.

JOHN WELLS's comedy *Maybe Tuesday* will be seen shortly at the Ambassadors.

EDMOND WRIGHT is Director of the Institute of United States Studies at the University of London.

Author, Author

Readers are invited to identify the sources of the three quotations which follow and to send us the answers so that they reach this office not later than Friday, May 23. A prize of £10 is offered for the first correct set of answers to be opened, or failing that the most nearly correct—in which case inspired guesswork will also be taken into consideration.

Entries should be addressed to The Editor, The Times Literary Supplement, PO Box No 7, New Printing House Square, Gray's Inn Road, London WC1X 8EZ, and marked "Author, Author" on the envelope. The solution and result will appear in our issue of May 30.

Competition No 21

1 Less near to life. Lean very near—nearer. . . .
Life is web, and therein nor warp nor woof is, but web only.
It is for this I am Catholick in church and in thought, yet do in Swift Mood weave there what the shuttle of Mood wills.
Where, if not from the Impressionists, do we get those wonderful brown logs that come creeping down our streets, blurring the gaslamps and changing the houses into monstrous shadows? To whom, if not to them and their master, do we owe the lovely silken misty tints brood over our river, and turn to faint forms of fading grace, curved bridge and swaying barge? The extraordinary change that has taken place in the climate of London during the last ten years is entirely due to a particular school of Art.

3 He snatched a bottle of Cologne,
And broke the neck between his hands;
He felt as if he was alone,
And mighty as a king's commands.

The Princess gave a little scream,
Carrousel's cut was sharp and deep;
He left her softly as a dream
That leaves a sleeper to his sleep.

He left the room on pointed feet;
Smiling that things had gone so well.
They hanged him in Meridian Street.

You pray in vain for Carrousel.

Result of Competition No 17

Winner: Miss F. Mary White, Flat 3, St Gregory's Road, Stratford-upon-Avon CU37 6UH.

Answers:

The ink this week (there is usually one, though not always) is provided by the Laureateship.

1 I too will something make
And joy in the making;
Albeit tomorrow it seem
Like the empty words of a dream
Remembered on waking.
—Robert Bridges, "I Love All Beauteous Things"

2 Blood Dick Heggit and Dickie Atkins
Had dancers' skirts on their horses' gaskins;
Crash Pete Snounce with that girl of Dowser's
Drove a horse that was wearing trousers;
The wagonette from The Old Pier Head
Drove to the tune "My Monkey's Dead".
—John Masefield, "Right Royal"

3 Scavenger barons and your jackal vassals,
Your pimping press-gang, your unclean vessels,
We'll make you swallow your words at a gulp
And turn you back to your element, pulp.
Don't bluster, Bimbo, it won't do you any good;
We can be much ruder and we're learning to shoot.
—C. Day Lewis, *The Magnetic Mountain*, 20

Fifty years on . . .

Robert Bridges died on April 21, 1930, at the age of eighty-six. In the TLS of May 1, Basil de Selincourt's leading article assessed his poetic achievement, concentrating on The Testament of Beauty *and in particular on Bridges's technical craftmanship:*

. . . In a consideration of the value and significance of his whole poetical work, that Testament, which has now for the first time popularized him, fills one scale of the balance, by its mingled scope and penetration out-weighing all else that he has written; and the problem for criticism is to see his career in a true perspective, to distinguish his essential quality and to exhibit the sources of the accumulating strength which made the last and greatest poem possible. From the first his preoccupation was with the technical side of the art. He had the most generous apprehension of the poet's function, and while working actively as a surgeon in early life still hoped to devote his manner strength to poetry. But the impulse to expression was not with him ungovernable; it was something to be placed deliberately in relation to the life it was to express, something for which he had to find by practice the appropriate vehicle. A hint of exceptional verse forms. One convention is adopted in Italy, another in France, and combined, it may be, with adventitious tricks or licences; till at last the reader's ear is framed to receive that pattern only and to believe that words will run only one way.

To read Bridges's experiments is to get a slow education and emancipation of our hearing, at its seat, and to part company with the prosodic dogmatists for ever; and if it be said that England has no strict convention, our freedom, we would answer, has not been all a gain; for too many poets, trusting to unlettered instinct, have confused incompatibles and deprived their work of all those ranges of effect which depend on a continuous understanding with the reader. TH "The Testament of Beauty" came, the bulk of his work was in the dramatic form . . . Lyric can lead to drama; the heat which enables a man to essentialize his experience enables him also to reduplicate it and see the world out of another's eyes. Such are Burns's lyrics; molten and magnetic, they leap barriers and are not to be enclosed. But Bridges, if he had not written plays, would hardly have been suspected of dramatic sympathies; for his lyrics are not volcanic and impulsive, but reflective and architectural. The dramas kept him thinking, creating, writing; their value is in that. . . .

Who read my tale as she hath smiled on me.

The words could not be quieter, but he has grouped and fashioned his whole poem so as to give them their perfect weight.

Workmanship as devoted as this brings with it its own peculiar inspiration. Bridges was a great craftsman, delighting to do good work and to find new kinds of work to do. Much of our present poetical despondency comes of an inhibition in which ardent feeling struggles against the unmalleable fact. But the heights, as he saw, are not to be assumed, they must be won; the more so that the poet is no longer now a function of society, a mouthpiece, a safety-valve; his feeling and vision must be his own. In all his multifarious activities Bridges was preparing the way for his strictly lyrical utterance; and it is when his utterance is most individual that it is hardest to distinguish character and craft. His metrical experiments will always be a model in their kind, and for a long time the study of them must form part of an English poet's apprenticeship. Their value is that they expose the element of arbitrariness in all accepted verse forms. One convention is adopted in Italy, another in France, and combined, it may be, with adventitious tricks or licences; till at last the reader's ear is framed to receive that pattern only and to believe that words will run only one way.

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Mind

Along the face
of this baffling space-time construct
an illusory straight line goes ticking
fringed with words

in its long push
towards continuity.
Somewhere below
a chafed sea sobs

washing up the monsters
through tanklike dark
and a thousand fragmentary
shades of green.

The tank's, or football's, edge is flicked
by things of the world:
frond, blade, loop and flange,
tiny ecstasies of light

all laying claim
to a genuine status.
Odd packets of language rise
to acknowledge them

while displaced waters ripplingly break
on pain; loss or breakfast.
The plot is set on a small star's
fortunate planet

which we (so to speak)
entitle Here
trying to make
a map or globe of sense

with a child's
original box of paints.

Chris Wallace-Crabbe

Down and out in Knoxville . . .

By Sandra Salmans

CORMAC McCARTHY :
Suttree
471pp. Chatto and Windus. £6.95.
0 7011 2506 3

Daytime, Cornelius Suttree strolls the river, casting—among the drops of sewage, among grey clots of nameless waste and yellow condoms—for the occasional catfish or carp that he sells to make his living. Night-time, he and his cronies, J-Bone and Hoghead and Boneyard, drink moonshine whiskey in the fly-specked Huddle bar, watched by bloated whores and homosexuals with wrists like broken lilies. He wakens hours later, in a backlot choked with dog turds and gutted car hulks, or sometimes in jail. Or he returns to the plasterboard houseboat that he owns, where he dreams of his twin brother who, stillborn, preceded him out of the womb.

Suttree, the hero who gives his name to Cormac McCarthy's latest novel, wanders untouched—or nearly so—through the weird and dangerous 1950s underworld in which he has voluntarily taken up residence. For reasons only vaguely explained, he has rejected his well-to-do family and a place among the solid citizenry of Knoxville, Tennessee, to live among the poor white trash and poorer black trash. Or, as McCarthy in characteristically rich language observes at the conclusion of *Suttree*, the man squanders several years

> in the company of thieves, derelicts, miscreants, pariahs, poltroons, spalpeens, curmudgeons, cotpolls, murderers, gamblers, bawds, whores, trulls, brigands, topers, tosspots, sots and archsots, lobcocks, smellsmocks, runngates, rakes, and other assorted and felonious debauchees.

Even in such company, a handful of exceptional characters stand out. Among them is Gene Harrogate, an eighteen-year-old country boy whom Suttree meets at the workhouse after the youth is arrested in a watermelon patch for sexual exploits unusual even by Knoxville standards. (Although the youth at first tells the other prisoners that he was only stealing, "the crimes of the moonlight melonmounter followed him as crimes will"; the prosecutor tried to charge him with bestiality, Harrogate blurts out, "but my lawyer told em a watermelon wasn't no beast. He was a smart son of a bitch.") Turned loose in Knoxville, the country mouse, as Suttree calls him, becomes a city mouse, trying to live by his perverted wits until he is caught on his first robbery and put away.

Then there is Leonard, a carbuncle-covered dishwasher who, when his father dies, sinks the corpse in the river in order to continue receiving the old man's welfare cheques. When the body resurfaces, dragging its chains, Leonard dutifully buries it in a plot bought on the instalment plan—and then worries about another resurrection when he cannot meet the payments. There is the old raggicker who holes up at the foot of the bridge and, ventriloquist-style, throws his voice around to convince hooligans that he is not alone. There is Harvey, the perpetually drunk proprietor of a fabulous junkyard in which roses bloom everywhere, columbines sprout from car chassis, and morning-glories and hummingbirds blanket iron bedframes. There is the queen of Front Street, a mascaraed black homosexual, slippery as "a neon eel", named Tripping *Through the Dew*. And finally there is Blind Richard, who can read with his fingers the inscriptions on the tombstones that serve as tables at one of Suttree's bars.

But even these bizarre creatures are merely sideshow attractions in Suttree's hellish world. On every streetcorner there are evangelists who curse their listeners' souls, legless beggars who bite passers-by, and passers-by who rob blind beggars. The river banks are lined with sullen youths, their fishing lines dipped into the oily surface on which erupt small bubbles of gas. In this world even children are ominous figures—snot-nosed, or clutching ghastly dolls—and inanimate objects are wreathed in terror. And in their midst is the ambiguous character of Suttree, entering only partially into the horror, coolly observing it all. His personal furies have driven him here, longing for death, but ultimately he is protected by his own sanity and luck.

Hellfire-breathing bible-thumpers and ambitious country bumpkins are familiar figures on the literary landscape of the American South, but McCarthy's characters are so vividly realized as to stand apart—as, too, is the seamy Knoxville underworld that they inhabit. At the same time, *Suttree* contains a humour that is Faulknerian in its gentle wryness, and a freakish imaginative flair reminiscent of Flannery O'Connor. McCarthy's Knoxville is as powerfully created as was Yoknapatawpha County and, although Suttree's eventual departure from it is necessary, it is with a sense of regret that one watches him leave town.

. . . and Sophiatown

By Alastair Niven

ATHOL FUGARD :
Tsotsi
168pp. Rex Collings. £5.
0 86036 128 4

Athol Fugard's reputation as a playwright is by now sufficiently well-established internationally to make the publication of any work by him an event. That his "new" work is a novel need not alarm his theatre followers, for it is twenty years old. It seems ironic that Fugard's important and grossly misinterpreted play *Dimetos* (1975) still awaits due recognition, while a novel which the author seemed at one time to have forgotten, and which came to light only through the researches of two MA students, should be given the full glare of publicity. The publicity, however, is justified.

Tsotsi was written in 1960-61, at the same time as Fugard's first stage success, *The Blood Knot*. It lay untouched until the author's permission was obtained by Stephen Gray to prepare an edited version for publication, which he has done in collaboration with Sheila Fugard. Mrs Fugard and Dr Gray have brought artistic judgment as well as publishing practicalities to bear on the text of what seems initially to have been a rather formless and at times hyperbolic novel. One melodramatic episode describing the impalation upon a crucifix of a Huddleston-type Anglican minister by the eponymous anti-hero has been wholly excised.

What results is entirely by Fugard, though Stephen Gray estimates that about fifteen to twenty per cent of the first version has been removed to make the novel cohere. Editing as discreet as this has helped create a lean, tense and persuasive novel of South African urban deprivation which will surely acquire a classic status between *Cry the Beloved Country* and *Walk in the Night*.

Indeed, it is more conventionally "thrilling" than either. Fugard describes the last six days in the life of Tsotsi, an urban delinquent Sophiatown who has knifed his way to survival since the police ran him away his mother one night and sought refuge in a dog kennel. Its ages of horror abound in this book none more sustained than Tsotsi's protracted stalking of a defenceless cripple down alleyways to the moment of redemptive confrontation. Episodes in each of the days are suffused with a mesmeric Tsotsi's past as he moves in his derment towards understanding himself and even to taking some kind of pride in who he is.

Tsotsi's discovery that he is able of loving other human beings (often formerly he had been accustomed only to feeling them, lusting after them or cultivating a calculating indifference to them) grows out of the bizarre circumstances in which he takes responsibility for a newborn baby. At the bottom of the South African scrapheap, humanity is not extinguished but character in the book illustrates this cardinal Fugard principle that no matter how brutal the system which has destroyed families, broken bodies and reduced hope to rubble, it cannot turn out as light.

The finale of *Tsotsi* has a few pages of Patonesque Christian liberalism which seem tacked on but in every other respect it is a strongly narrated and graphically credible novel. Future followers can have a field day recognising here embryonic characters and incidents which appear again in Fugard's plays and filmscripts. It is astonishing that a writer known previously only for his dialogue should achieve such success with his descriptions of solitary actions. I read *Tsotsi* expecting no more than an historically-curious annex to a major dramatist's career. I found instead an engrossing psychological thriller which is certainly one of the best novels in contemporary South African fiction.

Seeing Dante whole

By Prue Shaw

UGO FOSCOLO :
Studi su Dante
Parte prima: Articoli della Edinburgh Review, Discorso sul testo della Commedia
Edited by Giovanni da Pozza
809pp. Florence: Le Monnier. L25,000.

DANTE ALIGHIERI :
La Divina Commedia
Edited with commentary by Umberto Bosco and Giovanni Reggio
Inferno 514pp. *Purgatorio* 569pp. *Paradiso* 554pp.
Florence: Le Monnier. L4,000 each volume.

CECIL GRAYSON (Editor) :
The World of Dante
Essays on Dante and his Times
252pp. Clarendon Press: Oxford University Press. £14.
0 19 815760 6

Foscolo, writing on Dante in the *Edinburgh Review* in 1818, surveyed earlier commentaries on the *Comedy* and concluded that none of them illustrated (or even attempted to illustrate) the "beauties and defects" of Dante's poem. A century later Croce, in his centenary monograph on *La poesia di Dante* (1921), made a similar charge, accusing scholars and critics of devoting their attention to precisely those aspects of the poem which were of least interest aesthetically (historical elucidation and the unravelling of allegories). David Robey, in the penultimate essay of a new collection, calls for a "redirection of academic energies" towards analysis of the intrinsically poetic qualities of the text, and although what he means by this is something which neither Foscolo nor Croce would have recognized as the true concern of the critic, the sense that Dante-*scholars* have got their priorities wrong is as clearly present in his words as it was in theirs.

Foscolo's essay, now published with full scholarly apparatus in the first of the two volumes to be devoted to his *Studi su Dante* in the monumental *edizione nazionale* of his works, pointed to two principal difficulties in analysing the poem's aesthetic effects: the first was the inherent difficulty of dissecting "the workings of the imagination and the heart"; the second was the danger that any attempt to do so "ends in system, when it does not arise from it". His words seem strangely prophetic if we look forward to Croce, who, believing with Foscolo that what the critic does is in some sense to relive the experience the poet went through in creating his masterpiece, and then describes that experience for the enlightenment of readers, incorporates this account of the relationship between poet, critic and reader into a fully fledged aesthetic system which then pronounces on the nature of the creative act and lays down firm guide-lines as to what critical activity involves. Essentially, criticism can be equated with judgement ("evaluation" as we now call it), and judgement for Croce is not the canvassing of a personal taste or preference, but the detecting of the presence or absence of an objective quality, aesthetic value.

Croce's epoch-making monograph, in which his aesthetic theory was applied to the *Comedy*, is the point of reference in terms of which all Italian Dante-scholars since have defined themselves, explicitly or implicitly. But what at the time must have seemed a refreshingly direct invitation to cut through scholarly excrescences to the essence of Dante's art quickly came to have the rigidity and sterility of a system. To apply Croce's principles turned out in practice to impoverish Dante's poem rather than enhance our understanding of it. The result was a work divided into fragments: the genuinely poetic parts on the one hand, the non-poetic connecting parts on the other. Croce's own organic image for the *Comedy*—a vast edifice covered with flowering creeper—emphasized the intimate connection between structure and poetry (the creeper—the poetry—could only grow and flower because of the supporting structure); his followers tended to speak in terms more suggestive of a string of pearls, the pearls owing neither their existence nor their beauty to the thread which links them together.

In recent decades the fashion has swung to a robust rejection of Croce's aesthetic and of the view of the *Comedy* it entails. Sapegno, writing in 1955 in the introduction to what has remained since that date the single most impressive commentary on the poem we have, does open battle, declaring his firm intention "di riunire del tutto a quel modo di illustrazione cosiddetta estetica che oggi è d'uso, tutto inteso a sottolineare bellezze particolari ed episodiche e a distinguere, come si dice, la poesia dalla non-poesia: che è un modo, a me pare, non di intendere davvero, ma piuttosto di travisare il senso di un'opera, quale è la *Commedia* . . .".

Equally uncompromising was Sapegno's account of Dante's attitude to the souls of the damned in Hell, particularly to those great figures whose human qualities stand in such stark contrast to the fact of their damnation and the moral squalor which surrounds them. What Dante himself thought of these figures, and what the reader is supposed to make of them, has been a perennial area of debate in Dante studies. A long tradition, which can be traced from Foscolo through De Sanctis and Croce, has seen Dante's monumental damned as so moving and eloquent in human terms that their presence in Hell calls into question the central notion of God's justice and the moral system that goes with it. (Compare Blake's comment that Milton was of the Devil's party without knowing it.)

Sapegno insisted that to wrench these figures from the context of damnation was to misunderstand and misrepresent Dante's art. He rejected as misleading the contrast between poet and moralist—the poet's creation undermining the moralist's position—and preferred to make a distinction, in company with a number of other modern critics, between Dante *poeta* (the author of the poem) and Dante *personaggio* (the character in the poem). The *poeta*, who has completed the visionary experience and whose will is at one with God's, can show the *personaggio* as vulnerable to human instincts of sympathy, compassion, even admiration, but learning that these reactions are misguided is part of the painful process of moral and spiritual regeneration the poem portrays.

On this view, then, the aesthetic unity of the *Comedy* (indivisibility of structure and poetry) is matched by its conceptual unity: there are no fractures in Dante's moral universe. Indeed, aesthetic and conceptual unity are intimately linked: it is no accident that those parts of the *Inferno* singled out by Croce as genuinely poetic tended to be precisely the episodes dealing with the "great" figures. Sapegno's is the most cogently argued anti-Crocean commentary on the poem we have yet had. It has been enormously, and deservedly, influential—his two editions of the *Inferno* have run to more than thirty reprints.

Any new commentary on the *Comedy* appearing in Italy may be expected to define its position in relation to these issues. In Umberto Bosco and Giovanni Reggio's collaborative work, Bosco is responsible for the general introduction and the critical essays which precede each canto, Reggio has supplied the line-by-line commentary; the two mesh together very well. The attractive lay-out and modest price, coupled with the innovatory fact (a sign of the times) that all Latin quotations, whether classical or medieval, are translated, must make it a serious rival to the Sapegno commentary, which it matches in wealth and appositeness of historic and linguistic comment.

Bosco's contribution amounts to a connected series of *lecturae Dantis*, a sustained interpretative essay on Dante's poem. It reveals a curious mixture of attitudes. The anti-fragmentation stance is rehearsed almost wearily ("Tutti oggi si fanno un dovere di protestare contro la frantumazione colla poesia"). Equally, though implicitly, anti-Crocean are two of what Bosco himself declares to be the most original aspects of his commentary: the attempt to define more closely the sense in which the scientific-philosophic passages are also poetic, and the willingness to explore the connections between events narrated in the poem and the circumstances of Dante's own life. (Croce had of course maintained that philosophical poetry was a logical contradiction and that to assume a causal connection between life and art was naïve.)

More significant, however, because more consciously polemical, is Bosco's stand on the second issue, that of Dante's attitude to the damned. Here he is sharply at variance with Sapegno, and much closer to Croce than he openly acknowledges. The point is worth pursuing, because it constitutes the central *novità* of this edition (if taking a stand on ground so well worked over can constitute a *novità*).

Does Dante feel compassion towards the sinners in Hell? Of Francesca, the first sinner he talks to and traditionally one of the heroic figures, we are explicitly told that he feels *pietade* to the point that he faints dead away. Sapegno argues persuasively that the word *pietade* here means anguish, distress, mental turmoil, caused by Dante's perception of the connection between Francesca's fate and his own destiny. Bosco insists that it means compassion; more importantly, that the feeling is shared by *personaggio* and *poeta* ("ispira la pietà di Dante personaggio e quella (inscindibile) di Dante poeta . . ."); and, even more importantly, that this does not constitute a problem for critic or reader. Farinata, Brunetto, Ulisse, Ugolino are seen in comparable terms.

It seems legitimate to query whether Bosco has grasped the point of the *personaggio/poeta* distinction. Of Farinata, for example, he says: "Quando scriveva questo canto, Dante già da un pezzo aveva fatto 'parte per se stesso' . . . improponibile . . . quindi l'interpretazione tradizionale, che vede nel dialogo tra il ghibellino Farinata e il guelfo Dante lo scontro di due uomini di parte avversa." But surely the mature Dante (author) can represent the immature Dante

LATEST TITLES AND CURRENT BESTSELLERS
FICTION AND NON-FICTION

Giovanni Arpino
*IL FRATELLO ITALIANO
Alberto Bevilacqua
*UNA SCANDALOSA GIOVINEZZA
Enzo Biagi
*UNA SIGNORA COSÌ COSÌ
*CINA
Giorgio Bocca
*IL TERRORISMO ITALIANO
Giuseppe Bonaviri
*NOVELLE SARACENE
Manlio Cancogni
*NOSTRA SIGNORA DELLA SPERANZA
Carlo Cassola
*VITA D'ARTISTA
Carlo Castellaneta
*ANNI BEATI
Pietro Citati
*IL VELO NERO
Oriana Fallaci
*UN UOMO
Ennio Flaiano
*UN BEL GIORNO DI LIBERTÀ
Vittorio Gorresio
*LA VITA INGENUA

Armanda Guiducci
*ALL'OMBRA DI KALÌ
Tommaso Landolfi
*OTTAVIO DI SAINT VINCENT
Giovanni Macchia
*L'ANGELO DELLA NOTTE
Giorgio Manganelli
*CENTURIA
Indro Montanelli
Mario Cervi
*L'ITALIA LITTORIA
Giovanni Mosca
*IL NUOVO GALATEO
P. M. Pasinetti
*IL CENTRO
Michele Prisco
*GLI EREDI DEL VENTO
Giorgio Saviane
*LA DONNA DI LEGNO
Enzo Siciliano
*VITA DI PASOLINI
Giorgio Soavi
*SOGNI DI GLORIA
Stefano Terra
*LE PORTE DI FERRO
Giovanni Testori
*INTERROGATORIO A MARIA
Fulvio Tomizza
*L'AMICIZIA

RIZZOLI·EDITORE

Up and away in Montana

By Helen Carr

JAMES WELCH :
The Death of Jim Loney
179pp. Collancz. £5.95.
0 575 02784 3

> One reason the Indian people have not been heard from until recently is that we have been completely covered up by movie Indians . . . the movies have blocked out any idea that there might be real Indians with real problems.

That was written ten years ago by Vine Deloria, the Indian Rights leader; since then James Welch, a half Blackfoot, half Gros Ventre Indian, has written two novels of disturbing clarity about contemporary life on and off the reservation, always aware that one of the problems "real" Indians face is that of coming to terms with the myths about themselves.

In his earlier novel, *Winter in the Blood*, as in some of his poetry, James Welch comically exploits the distance between the romanticized Indian and the incongruous clash of new and old worlds in which he now lives. The central character and narrator of that novel describes his Cree girlfriend, shortly to run off with his gun and razor, obsessed by movie magazines and imagining herself as Raquel Welch; she sits opposite his grandmother, who, toothless, almost blind, once third wife of a Blackfoot chief, plans to murder this tribal enemy with her paring knife. That novel about a reservation Indian was concerned with continuities and renewals. In *The Death of Jim Loney*, the story of a half-breed, half-alcoholic drop-out, the struggle to find such continuities is much harder, though Loney longs "to create a past, a background, an ancestry—something to tell him who he was".

In Harlem, Montana ("home of the 1958 Class B Champs", the town sign says, the basketball team for which Loney played) the wind always blows from the Canadian north. Loney wanders from the uneasy companionship of the bars to solitary drinking and dreaming in his small kitchen. It's Indian country, with reservation lands to the south in the Little Rockies, but Loney remains apart: "He had no family and he wasn't Indian or white."

James Welch writes sparely and evocatively; the structure of the novel is that of Loney's "crisis of spirit", as his lover Rhea calls it; though Harlem's bleakness and harsh winter echo his malaise, he is drifting away from awareness of the present, physical world. Gradually he repossesses the memories of his past; among others, those of his Indian mother, now crazy, and of his surrogate mother, Sandra, his father's deserted lover, now dead. Deep-seated memories of losses and betrayals have eaten away at his substance until "somewhere along the line he had started questioning his life and he had lost forever the secret of survival". He can't survive; but as he follows those questions back he comes to a kind of peace with himself. He's drawn back to his Indian past, and chooses to die on Indian land, shot down (as Vine Deloria has said, all the great Indian leaders were) by a fellow Indian, the reservation policeman.

The language of *The Death of Jim Loney* is simple and direct; it isn't possible here to do justice to the intricate and subtle unfolding of relationships or the interweaving of them. N. Scott Momaday, probably the best known Indian novelist, said once that "none but an Indian, I think, knows so much what it is like to have existence in two worlds and security in neither". Welch suggests that Loney's position is but the extreme of that experienced by all Indians, all half-breeds now. A mythic novel as well as a psychological one, it is on one level an enactment of Indian loss, and a fear for the continuity of Indian life; politically it appeals for acceptance of change but against assimilation. As in Welch's earlier novel, however, that plea is essentially one for the continuity of family and place, for the value of affection, and for the dignity of the individual.

To and fro in Paris

By Alan Jenkins

THERESE de SAINT PHALLE :
Le métronome
193pp. Paris: Gallimard.

In *Le métronome* passions run high, and Thérèse de Saint Phalle allows herself to be carried along with them. Whether or not the reader does too will depend on how much he, or she, can take of this: "Avait-il galopé des heures sur un cheval? Dominait-il un nid d'aigle? Campait-il aux confins de la taïga, là où les roseaux se substituent aux bouleaux? Faisait-il partie de ces Tcherkesses, princes de Caucase?" Anne, sixteen-year-old "lycéenne modèle courant" and an engagingly bright, modest heroine, has just set eyes for the first time on Jiri, a dashing musical prodigy. Jiri is a Czech, intense, enigmatic and deeply into his religious and cultural "roots", but far too well indoctrinated not to be grounded in his country's colourless regime by the glittering career it has mapped out for him towards since birth; but love for Anne, but belongs to the Soul.

Anne is just as taken with Jiri's and depth of infatuation aside, her failure to understand why it is that he must leave her is not her fault. All Jiri's attempts to explain arise from the fact that the artist seems more interested in musical lore than the actual realities of life in the Eastern bloc. Accounts of restricted travel, and stoically-accepted deprivation barely glance beneath the surface of popular Western conception, while Anne's background, considerable, bourgeois and intellectual, evoked fully and affectionately. Descriptions of her childhood surroundings, her parents' garden and Paris market scenes, are full of charm—Saint Phalle is clearly at ease with the imagery of the 16ème Arrondissement. She is not much at ease, though, with the young lovers' turbulent passions (and there is, as Anne suspects, Another Reason for Jiri's reluctance to commit himself).

This said, Anne's vulnerability, the urgency and above all the purity of her awakening to the consequent struggle to reconcile her own desires with Jiri's otherness and the pain of her failure, are shrewd and touchingly caught. The political dimension fades from Jiri's mind and we are left, for all reference to contemporary boundaries, geographical, ideological or otherwise, with an old-fashioned tear-jerker. When at last, two years on, Anne settles in happy domesticity, meets Jiri, despite his star status and now a cultural ambassador, the sophisticated womanizer, she still grips them again; with all my experience to the contrary, I still wanted the consummance their old love. That is not, but this time Anne is the dramatic one, and it is her choice to.

Thérèse de Saint Phalle takes many liberties: the novel is possibly cast, and gets away with some of them.

The Ferry

From where you are calling? The fog
echoes you faintly. It is time;
again from the huts the ravening dogs
leap to the river on the scent
shining with blood on the far shore
a polecat leers. This is a ferry I know:
there, on the water, black
stones rise up; and all those ships
that pass in the night with sulphur torches.
Already now you are far away
though your voice has the myriad tones of echo,
and I hardly hear its cadence.
But I see you: you have violets clasped
in your hands, so pale, and lichens
near your eyes. So you must be dead.

Salvatore Quasimodo

Translated by Jack Bevan

Back and beyond in Somerset

By Michael Trend

GEOFFREY HOUSEHOLD :
The Sending
167pp. Michael Joseph. £5.95.
0 7181 1872 3

The manuscript of a hitherto unknown play dated around the second decade of the seventeenth century has just been acquired by the British Library. Offered for sale in 1973 but refused an export licence, it has been purchased by private treaty. An Arthurian tragi-comedy, the play is said to read like a pastiche of popular styles, intended for performance at the Inns of Court. Although the text is incomplete, full stage-directions are included, which may help to throw new light on Jacobean stage conditions.

Aligit I. Hollaston is being followed—but by what is not yet clear, to him. A descendant of an old family who have lived in the same valley in Somerset for many generations, Aligit, having been a soldier in India, has come back to his family's house and concentrated on his painting. With him lives Meg, a wild polecat, who had previously belonged to Paddy Gadsden, the local saddler with a reputation as a healer of horses. Paddy was killed at night on a country road by a car, and the circumstances of his death increase the sense of mystery about him. It was felt locally that Paddy was able to work in a supernatural way, and that Meg was his familiar. The polecat, it seems, is now beginning to play a similar role with Aligit.

Aligit's mind works back to the stage of human development that predates the Neolithic Revolution. He feels that he is part of some old stone age—a world of hunters, where man is still clearly and closely part of the animal order; a time when men still possessed a sixth sense—in Aligit's case this sense is warning him that he is being hunted. He is increasingly receptive to these warnings and finds out that he is also able to send out "messages" himself, the polecat acting as a kind of transmitter.

Aligit now becomes the hunter, and during his quest for vengeance learns much about witchcraft and himself. He begins to understand the strange powers that he has previously seen in India (where he is a bloodbrother to a shaman), in some of his own paintings, and in his relations to other people.

Geoffrey Household's *The Sending* is an exciting and compelling story. Household has with reason been compared to John Buchan, and this novel shares much of the virility and strangeness often prominent in Buchan's work. He also has that more complicated sense of the supernatural which one finds in the novels of Charles Williams, though his characters belong more firmly to the real world. Aligit is the sort of deep-rooted Englishman whom one expects to find in the West Country. He is both solidly part of the local community and spiritually in communion with the ancient landscape, as familiar with village gossip as he is with the symbols of Jung. Mr Household is able to convey convincingly this ambiguous and powerful world where the conventional boundary between the natural and the more than natural has no meaning.

The practical theoretician

By David Robey

CESARE SEGRE :
Semiotica filologica
Testo e modelli culturali
189pp. Turin : Einaudi. L6,000.

For the "aesthetic" criticism which Croce founded, and which until the 1950s dominated the academic study of literature in Italy, *filologia* was simply a tool that cleared the way for higher-order intellectual tasks. It provided the critic with his text and helped him understand it; but his essential activity was to draw on philosophical knowledge in order to judge whether or not the text possessed aesthetic value. Criticism was strongly theoretical, "philology" merely practical. In Italy, then as now, the theoretical enterprise had the higher standing.

Yet in the Italian academic world the term *filologia* has always had a broader meaning than its English counterpart. Like the German *Philologie*, it is only in part a linguistic discipline; its main concern is with literary texts, and not with their language only, but also with their historical genesis and meaning. In reality, therefore, it was an alternative to "aesthetic" criticism, rather than its instrument. By no means all *filologi* accepted during Croce's ascendancy the subordinate role that the critics assigned to them.

Thus there is some historical irony in the title of Cesare Segre's *Semiotica filologica*. For in the minds of a great many Italians the place of Crocean aesthetics has now been occupied by semiotic literary theory, and semiotics, it would seem, is the current Italian taste for aesthetics, is due in large part to the efforts of *filologi* (like him), who found in this subject the means for developing their own discipline. *Semiotica filologica* is the fourth in a series of books by Segre on the semiotics of literary study, but its title could probably have been given to any of the preceding three; and describes accurately some of the most influential work now done by Italian literary scholars.

As in the three previous volumes, Segre offers here a combination of theoretical discussion — about aspects of semiotics, structuralism and the study of literature — and concrete literary analysis. Since all the chapters have been separately published as articles or conference papers, the book inevitably falls short of providing a clear and systematic picture of a particular approach to literary questions. The theoretical essays are dense, allusive and disparate (one is on the semiotics of art, another on textual criticism), and the instances of literary analysis are less than perfect illustrations of the theory. But while one may well regret that Segre has not yet chosen to present his views in a comprehensive form, a consistent set of principles and methods does emerge from this collection.

How do semiotics and "philology" manage to coexist? The most distinctive feature of Segre's semiotics is that he remains true to the fundamental axioms of traditional literary scholarship, only qualifying and restating them. He believes that a work has, at least in principle, an original meaning of its own, and that this meaning can only be understood by reference to the context in which the work was produced. The original meaning can never be wholly recreated, as the scholar cannot help projecting his own vision of things on to his material; yet the attempt at recreation must nonetheless be made, with as much historical accuracy and objectivity as is humanly possible. This a-historical treatment of literature, and in particular the idea, fostered by the *nouvelle critique*, of its infinite plurality, are in Segre's view incompatible with a true semiotic (and philological) understanding of the subject.

This concern for historical accuracy is not, it should be added, simply the consequence of Segre's philological training. Marxism is in the background of more than one of the essays in the book, though perhaps less than in his last volume, *Semiotica, storia e cultura*. For instance, his conception of the emphasis on the "pragmatic" context of a literary work is clearly a potential avenue of reconciliation between Marxism and semiotics, even if in practice Segre does not follow this avenue very far. Altogether, while he would probably not claim great originality as a contributor to semiotic theory, he brings to the subject a range of academic interests and experience which makes him a more persuasive theorist than many.

If Segre's semiotics has been strongly shaped by his philology, what in its views has philology to gain from semiotics? The first essay in the volume, "Semiotica e filologia", proposes a theoretical answer to the question: "As the general theory of signs, semiotics offers the possibility of describing literary forms with greater precision and consistency than has traditionally been possible, and within the framework of a set of concepts common to a wide variety of disciplines. It breaks down the barriers between the different branches of the arts and social sciences; and by permitting the modern literary specialist to view his discipline in a broader context than his predecessors, it gives him the opportunity of expressing his findings in a more persuasive and theoretically reputable form.

The practical answer to the same question is given in descriptive literary analyses in the second half of the volume, all of which are interesting, though not necessarily very novel in their approach. The last chapter in particular, an attempt to define the character and function of Italian macaronic literature, shows only slight evidence of semiotic interests. Except for a certain amount of linguistic terminology, it could easily have been written by a scholar of the conventional philological mould. The other samples of literary analysis (on a *novella* of the *Decameron*, the Boccaccian sources of Lope de Vega's play, Alfieri's satires and a poem of Fernando Pessoa) draw more heavily on structuralist or semiotic methods. They use a more elaborate technical terminology (sometimes to the point of self-caricature) and lay considerable stress on the presence of formal patterns, especially binary structures, in the texts. But if the significance of these structures is not always wholly clear in Segre's interpretations, in general he remains true to his philological principles by treating his texts as historical phenomena, and assigning an objective meaning to them. The difference between this and more traditional forms of literary description is principally one of terminology and emphasis.

It follows that, for the practical critic, Segre's work is unlikely to open up exciting new lines of enquiry. More conventional scholars will no doubt find much of his terminology confusing, while to more radical structuralists and semioticians his ideas must seem rather old-fashioned. Yet this formidably clever man is certainly well worth watching, and not only for the remarkable optimism and sense of balance he has shown in walking the tightrope between two disciplines usually regarded as antagonistic. Semiotics is certainly, at least for a while, in the ascendant, as well as on the Continent at the same time. "philological" scholarship is unlikely to disappear overnight. This development of literary studies in the immediate future must depend to a very large extent on the kind of mediatory work between the two fields that Segre has carried out, and which for the present no one, perhaps, can do better than he can.

The autonomous self

By Nicholas Mann

UGO DOTTI :
Petrarca e la scoperta della coscienza moderna
200pp. Milan : Feltrinelli. L.3,500.

CHARLES TRINKAUS :
The Poet as Philosopher
Petrarch and the Formation of Renaissance Humanism
147pp. Yale University Press. £8.80.
0 300 02327 8

It is no doubt a tribute to Petrarch's modernity that two men writing within such different traditions and for such different audiences as Ugo Dotti and Charles Trinkaus should independently attribute to him a major share in the creation of modern consciousness. Yet so rich and varied is Petrarch's experience of himself and the world as he allows us to perceive it, that it is not altogether surprising if, despite a measure of agreement as to the nature of that experience, two rather different, though complementary, views of his achievement should emerge.

Dotti and Trinkaus share the conviction that Petrarch can only be understood through the totality of his writings: that he cannot simply be divided into Italian love-poet and Latin humanist, but is both, and that the activities of the vernacular lyricist, literary lion and man of action can only properly be interpreted in the context of the equally essential roles of the classical scholar and Latin moralist, the self-critical contemplative and spiritual seeker. It is a token of Petrarch's stature, and of his fundamental perception of a dichotomy between the revealed truth of religion and the experienced truth of existence, that what he has bequeathed to us of his life reflects an unceasing struggle to resolve the contradiction: the will to translate divine truths into human action through poetry, to overcome the alienation of urban life by establishing a personal autonomy through that total cultural activity that is humanism, and to fulfil a moral mission by teaching all men to do likewise.

Trinkaus, writing from the Olympian detachment of a distinguished career devoted to the study of medieval and Renaissance Christian thought, focuses upon the philosopher in Petrarch. He sees him as anticipating by some three hundred years the Puritan's lonely struggle with his conscience, as he attempted to reconcile within himself the conflict implied by the double awareness of the man at once medieval and classical: that of the misery of the human condition and yet the dignity of the individual. As moralist, Petrarch's concern was to overcome his subjective experience to the level of universal and objective truth through the medium of poetry, thus shifting the balance away from that objectivity which characterizes classical thought towards a new subjectivity which will be the mark of the Renaissance. It is a keynote (and a Senecan one) of the new autonomy of the individual that he urges that it is better to will the good than to know the truth; we must be aware, however, that the truth about Petrarch as it appears in his writings is more often the result of careful cogitation and wilful self-construction than of spontaneous and sincere confession.

Dotti's Petrarch, on the other hand, is more impassioned: the problematic figure of the committed intellectual in a hostile environment, seen in the perspective of Hegel and Lukács. Here is a man of action, caught in the cross-currents of political, social and religious ideologies, in the teeth of which he must achieve cultural and intellectual autonomy. Here, the essential assertion of will is that required to realize his human potential and establish his independence, whether of popes, patrons or literary models; the cultural life, allied in Petrarch's case to passionate adherence to political ideals, is at least travel and diplomatic activity, must exemplify the crisis of the individual in society. Thus, as against Christian transcendentalism, Petrarch speaks for the moral autonomy of the individual; as against Visconti tyranny, for political liberty, as against the temporal limitations of this life, for the consciousness of the eternal human.

An essential element of Petrarch's cultural identity is his total involvement with the world of ancient world: his deep dependence upon classical antiquity, manifested by his constant struggle to transcend mere imitation in the search for a creative identity of his own. Trinkaus sees him as a point of departure, and has been able to trace by surveying his knowledge and use of classical philosophy, how he was less concerned with the exemplary value than with the classical precedent, and the moral and moralistic ends to which it could be turned. If the philosopher who emerges from this sometimes schematic analysis is not entirely consistent, we should remember that the works on which the argument is based (some of the deliberately more eloquent and considerable number of years. Thus, Petrarch's Latin polemic and moral writings and the Secretum, the dialogue where he plays Petrarch —himself as his own hero— against Augustinus (the St Augustine of the *Confessions*, here disguised as his self as self-critic) were ones which Petrarch constantly revised over a more contradictory than in Italy, rather than some timeless and definitive image of the self, which we in fact perceive through them, in Montaigne's term, the passage, the dynamics of the writer's creation.

Dotti's central focus falls on Petrarch's letters, with which he has long been occupied, and which rightly sees, together with the *Secretum* and the Italian lyrics, the constituent elements of a idealized intellectual autobiography. He too surveys classical sources (identifying a substantial body of new ones for the *Familiares*) and demonstrates by close analysis, by dissection and careful comparison both of Latin and vernacular texts, how Petrarch made his own peculiar had drawn from others. More and more precise concerns, the classics, but also the moral issues less essential to a full understanding of the process whereby this eternally dissatisfied creator could use his independence both in style and in thought, even of those writers whom he most dearly wished to emulate.

Yet we remain. Petrarch's despite what can now be studied in every what he left us as evidence of his self-awareness and the self he wished to construct. It may well be that in point of fact it was the philosopher who became a poet, and that the search for an objective truth was thus subtly subverted into a quest for a far more complex fiction: the portrait of the artist as a complete man. One may suspect that in assembling this image Petrarch was not entirely honest with himself, but there can be little doubt to the extent with the remarkable coherence and role of the Daphne myth as a structuring principle in Petrarch's conception of himself as lover, poet, Apollonian man of the humanist, Apollo and the nymph metamorphosed into laurels—laurels without which his poetic lady Laura might well have had no name, he himself no crown, his ambition no symbol, his poetic conscience, even, no focus, and indeed perhaps his garden no place. Monsignor was later to wish to be planting cabbages, and indeed to the fate of the cabbages: Petrarch's sole desire in life was writing, and his greatest fear (among other things) how passionately he was concerned with the growth of the laurels he planted in his garden in Milan in 1357.

Petrarch has been seen as such an "uomo senza storia"; yet the history of his evolution as poet and philosopher is in the strictest sense his writing, the endless flow of texts ceaselessly rewritten in perfect fluidity. Image they were to reflect. Both Trinkaus and Dotti illuminate our understanding of this process, and the self-awareness that created it, so that in the possession of modern consciousness we may assert that Petrarch never was of those who, as he says, "know not become what they have been because they know that they were what people talk of and they were ignorant".

A new Italian edition of Giovanni Boccaccio's *Decameron* has been published (Florist: Sansoni, 1471pp. L30,000). It is edited, with a critical introduction, a biographical note and detailed annotations by Vittore Branca, Professor of Italian Literature at the University of Padua.

The proliferation of the press

By John A. Davis

GALANTE GARRONE and P. DELLA PERUTA :
La Stampa Italiana del Risorgimento
690pp. Bari: Laterza. L.14,000.

GIUSEPPE TALAMO :
Il Messaggero e sua città
Volume I : 1878-1918
325pp. Florence : Le Monnier. L10,000

LUCIANA FRASSATTI :
Un uomo, un giornale
Alfredo Frassatti
Part 1: Two volumes, 553 and 585pp.
Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura. L50,000 the set

Alfredo Frassatti, who founded Turin's *La Stampa* at the turn of the century, described newspapers as "one of the most complex and delicate organisms of modern society", and subsequent experience has revealed even more fully the complexity and delicacy of this fundamental institution of democratic society. In few Western societies has the struggle to create an independent press been more chequered and more contradictory than in Italy, and few are experiencing the contemporary crisis of the press with similar intensity. An ailing economy and a still relatively small newspaper-reading public have combined to magnify a crisis common to all the advanced industrial nations, and the massive deficits of recent years have led to a wild carousel in which the quality Italian dailies have passed from owner to owner like so many pawns. The great family empires built up at the start of the century have collapsed, only to be replaced by new and yet larger giants, headed by the vast parastatal petrochemical concern Montedison and flanked by the Rizzoli publishing empire and Agnelli's Fiat.

It is the political implications of this ever-narrowing structure of economic control which lie at the heart of growing public concern in Italy. The mysterious silences of the press during Italy's occult political crises of the 1960s had already caused widespread misgivings, and the unrelenting, unpredictable and often unfathomable terrorist onslaughts on the country's democratic institutions since the Milan bomb outrage of 1969 have brought the demands for free, critical and genuinely competitive access to information to a crescendo. But despite a parliamentary inquiry into the press, and a vigorous campaign for editorial freedom led by the journalists themselves, it is difficult to see how the gulf between democratic aspiration and economic reality can be easily or rapidly bridged.

In contrast to the preoccupations of the present and the bleak record of the 1920s and 1930s, it is tempting to idealize the journalism of the Risorgimento and its part in politics. Massimo D'Azeglio described as the "conspiracy in broad daylight". In the most recent volume of Laterza's new and interesting history of the Italian press, Alessandro Galante Garrone and Franco Della Peruta trace the evolution of the press in these years as the principal national forum for political debate and organization. With startling rapidity Italy was able to attain a ranking behind only Britain and France in terms of numbers of newspapers in circulation. Viesseux's *Antologia*, Cattaneo's *Politecnico* and Tenca's *Rivista Europea* established a tradition of serious journalism on a par with the best in Europe, while Mazzini's belief in the "apostolic" purpose of the press was to bring a new style and aim to political journalism.

But there were also major limitations, which were to survive well beyond 1860. The proliferation of publications reflected not the breadth of the audience but rather the diffusion of small cultural centres through the peninsula. Both before and after unification poverty and illiteracy inhibited the development of either a popular press (despite some important initiatives) or a genuine newspaper press. All the unbounding confidence of a Mazzini and the proselytizing conviction of the Liberals were needed in the battle against omnipresent and often mindless censorship—in Turin in the 1830s sensitivity was so great that a culinary weekly was banned because it might encourage cooks to question their mistresses' pasta recipes. When the reaction after 1849 blocked out the rest of the peninsula, Piedmont was to take over from Lombardy and Tuscany as the home of the free press—but significantly it was in these years that Cavour first effectively pioneered the creation of what became known as a "ministerial press", through the discriminating placement of government subsidies and advertising.

The years after 1860 were a disappointing sequel. It was left largely to the specialist periodicals to keep up the quality tradition for their narrow public, but there were few attempts to break through to wider or more regular audiences, apart from the radical Genoese daily *Il Secolo*. It is this that makes the Rome *Messaggero* of particular interest, because it set out to copy the *Secolo* and for a good while succeeded. The *Messaggero* was founded by Luigi Cesana in 1878, and Giuseppe Talamo shows how Cesana was able to achieve independence for his paper by building up a stable circulation among the bureaucratic middle class of the capital (by 1911 the circulation was nearly 60,000 copies a day). What Cesana wanted was "a newspaper for everyone", which meant a direct and simple style of writing, detailed coverage of local news, special law-court features, literary comment and serialized novels. The editorial line was generally critical of government, quick to press for economies, interested in social problems and investigation, and ready to play up to the anticlericalism of the Roman bourgeoisie.

But for all its modernity, the *Messaggero* remained predominantly a local paper, demonstrating that the press contributed as much to the survival of regional culture as to the formation of national opinion. And when the real battle to dominate and regiment public opinion began, its independence was an early victim. After 1900 Cesana gradually withdrew, the editorial line became more stridently anti-socialist and then an early and complete convert to colonialism and interventionism. By 1915 the *Messaggero* had shared the fate of its model, the *Secolo*, and passed into the hands of the Perrone brothers of Ansaldo.

Luciana Frassatti's massive study based on the correspondence of her father, the creator of *La Stampa*, promises to be of major importance for the history both of the Italian press and of the Giolittian period as a whole. Deeply imbued with the political culture of the Piedmontese ruling class, Alfredo Frassatti became one of Giolitti's closest friends and staunchest supporters. His correspondence throws important light on the great crises of the Libyan war and intervention in 1915 and, as Gabriele de Rosa points out in his introduction, reveals that Frassatti was among the most acute observers of contemporary international relations.

But above all he was a newspaper man, and an outstanding example of the new European model of editor-proprietor. In 1897 he transformed the Turin *Gazzetta Piemontese* into *La Stampa*—within ten years his paper had achieved a European stature and with nearly 100,000 copies a day had become the principal rival in Italy of Alberitni's *Corriere della Sera*. He saw the newspaper explicitly as an instrument for moulding and directing public opinion, and although he was the first professional journalist to be elected a senator he repeatedly refused offers to stand as a candidate in his native textile-manufacturing province of Biella on the grounds that "as director of a leading newspaper he considered himself to be above politics". When Italy occupied Tripolitania in 1911 he hailed this as a miracle achieved by "that great and under-estimated force, journalism", and drew a direct parallel with the role of the press in Italy's unification fifty years earlier.

But when the press took the lead in orchestrating the public clamour for intervention in the European war two years later, Frassatti was to recoil in horror, like the sorcerer's apprentice, from the demon that had been unleashed. Against the increasingly venomous attacks of the interventionist press, led by the *Corriere*, which became the rallying-point for all Giolitti's opponents, *La Stampa* appealed for sanity and for a policy of "vigilant neutrality". Although his predictions on the likely duration of the war and on Italy's unpreparedness were to prove more than justified, Frassatti remained deeply disillusioned by his failure to "delay the war by so much as a day or an hour, let alone save the life of a single soldier".

Industrialization and the growing economic complexity of Italian society lay behind the rapid expansion of the daily press after 1900, and they brought to a premature close the struggle to create an independent press. When the battle was joined to sot public opinion up as a counter-weight to parliament, the great industrial interests were no slow to move themselves. In 1925 Frassatti and Albertini were deprived of their papers, and the press empires established by the Perrones, the Crespis and the Agnellis before 1915 were consolidated. It is ironical that it should have been Mussolini, one of the outstanding political journalists of the twentieth century, who dealt the death-blow to Italy's independent press, for under the absurd slogan of "the Italian press is a free press because it is a fascist press" a whole generation of Italian journalism and much of the tradition from which it had sprung was suffocated. But the crisis had pre-dated fascism and was to outlive it.

The new historical journals

By Stuart Woolf

Historical journals have never been lacking in Italy. The regional "deputazioni di storia patria" (a post-unification phenomenon) offered cultural compensation for the loss of political and administrative autonomy. Initially they displayed an almost anthographic concern for a past buried by unification which, in good positivist style, was to be revealed by the publication of documents. It would not be difficult to trace the path of historical fashions through the lengthy runs of these publications. Alongside the periodical publications of even more eminent academies, they have continued to offer outlets for historical research. Nor is it accidental that some historical journals of recent date—like *Quaderni Storici delle Marche*, now focusing on local history, should have begun with a regional label.

Journals without a regional orientation—such as the *Rivista Storica Italiana*, the *Rassegna del Risorgimento*, or the *Nuova Rivista Storica*—were few in number before the 1950s. Their multiplication since then falls essentially into three phases. The years of the "economic" miracle" witnessed the publication both of Marxist journals (*Movimento Operaio e Socialista*, 1955, *Studi Storici*, 1959) and others espousing, *mutatis mutandis*, the traditional Crocean approach (*Clio Storica*, 1962, *Clio*, 1965).

Nineteen sixty-eight marked an important moment for historical journals, as for so much else in Italy. It led to the temporary demise of *Critica Storica* which, according to its editor Armando Saitta, "could no longer act as a link between historical research in schools because of the fossilization of the humanistic model of the school". But 1968 also gave a decisive push towards contemporary history (as much for scientific reasons as for scientific reasons) leading to the publication of such journals as *Storia Contemporanea* (1970), edited by Renzo de Felice, and the *Rivista di Storia Contemporanea* (1972), Marxist- and anti-Defelice), as well as to an expansion of the interests of the journal of the Resistance movement *Il Movimento di Liberazione in Italia* (initially published in 1940), marked by its change of title to *Italia Contemporanea* (1974).

Paradoxically, the boom in contemporary history, based on the reaction against what was considered to be academic irrelevance, has tended to reinforce the traditional emphasis on political-ideological "histoire événementielle". The latest phase, and the new journals of the past few years—*Storia Urbana* (1977) and *Società e Storia* (1978)—share with *Quaderni Storici* dissatisfaction with the traditional models of political and intellectual history and display a marked shift in interest towards the methodologies of social history.

Studi Storici was important in the 1960s through its success in broadening the confines of historical study in Italy to Marxist themes involving international approaches and parameters, such as working-class movements and institutions. *Quaderni Storici* (published in Bologna by Il Mulino) has played an even more significant role in the 1970s through a conscious policy (one is tempted to call it a mission) of continuously exposing Italian historiography to the major themes, concepts and methodological problems debated in French, "Anglo-Saxon" and (most recently) German academic circles. As Alberto Caracciolo, its *spiritus rector*, pointed out, even in *Quaderni Storici*'s early years, when it was produced by a small group at the University of Ancona, it was through a historiography open to the social sciences that the journal chose to keep abreast of international debates. By concentrating the major part of each issue on a specific theme, *Quaderni Storici* has been able to combine review articles by foreign contributors with specialised contributions usually on Italy.

Even a cursory glance through the issues produced since the journal was relaunched in 1970, with a broader editorial structure, offers some idea of its ambitious aims: agriculture and capitalist development, ecclesiastical structures since the Council of Trent, demographic history, feudalism and class relations, intellectual and cultural centres, the archaeology and geography of settlements, pre-capitalist societies, economic development in Latin America, classes, orders and institutions, the new economic history, etc. The debt towards *Annales* has always been visible, that towards *Past and Present* less evidently so. In recent years, the search for the avant-garde has become marked, with increasing stress being laid on methodology and anthropology: material culture, the family as community and form of power, oral history, literacy and written culture, quantitative history and micro-history. "Frontiers of history", the somewhat pretentious title of a recent issue (1979, No 40) is a fair overall description of this Mark II version of *Quaderni Storici* in which the history of Italy as such has lost in importance as it has been transformed into a testing-ground for the identification of historical structures.

Social history has never been the monopoly of *Quaderni Storici*. But, in different ways, both *Società e Storia* (Milan: Franco Angeli) and *Storia Urbana* (Milan: Franco Angeli) have had to measure themselves against it. For the editorial group of *Società e Storia*, perhaps the most important reason given in justification of the journal was the danger of losing sight of the Italian historical wood for the methodological trees. Whatever the articles of faith in Marx and Gramsci as offering the explanatory framework for the long-term international and internal causes of Italy's peculiar historical development, the contents of the first two years of *Società e Storia* strike the reader as being, for the most part, social history in the modern sense—that is, with a strong conceptual and (less consistently) comparative approach. Landed patrimonies, aristocracies, social structures and mobility, demographic crises, textile alongside class and craft, factory conditions, Foucaultian medicine, ideological bases and usages of educational policies, *popular* culture. The issues tend to cluster around the early modern period and the late nineteenth century, following the interests of two of the leading figures in the editorial group, Mario Mirri and Franco Della Peruta. But there is no clear "line", except for the reliance on social science methods and concepts in the interpretation of the social history of Italy, a tendency even more clearly reflected in the substantial and excellent review sections.

Storia Urbana represents the most explicit attempt at an interdisciplinary journal, trying to bridge the gap between historical and architectural-urbanistic studies of Italian cities. Like its subject-matter, urban history, the journal has not yet found an unambiguous focal point. But in its first three years it has offered a substantial number of studies of the medieval and twentieth centuries, which hint collectively at the possibility of new perspectives and approaches.

It would be absurd to attempt to assess the state of Italian historiography through a small sample of periodical publications. The historical world in Italy is profoundly fragmented, in terms of specializations, and political and ideological allegiance; because of its complexity it offers contradictory, some times distorting images. If, for example, one chose to survey Italian historiography on the basis of the books produced by the major commercial publishers, or—at the other extreme—of the structure of the academic profession since the war, one would emerge with substantially different and often conflicting assessments, compared to those based on the content of periodicals.

Among the more interesting aspects of the journals is their awareness of and readiness to discuss the negative consequences that have resulted from this fragmentation, such as the distribution of research funds or the introduction of a new university degree in history. (Would that English historical journals discussed, for example, the implications for future research of the stop-go policy of recruitment of graduates to history departments).

It has been customary, at least since the end of fascism, for Italian historiography to complain about its provincialism, compared to somewhat idealized images of English, French or American historiography. As if in compensation, Italian culture in general has shown itself to be perhaps the most open and receptive in Europe. The journals under discussion reflect both this sense of inferiority and the cultural openness. It would be arrogant for an English historian to conclude that there are evidence that Italian historiography has come of age. It is more appropriate to suggest that English historians whose interests extend beyond the provincial, even if they are unwilling to learn Italian, should at least follow the English summaries in *Quaderni Storici* and the useful survey articles of developments in Italian historiography in the new (1978) English-language *Journal of Italian History* (Florence : Vallecchi).

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Parties and pressure-groups

By Paul Addison

KEITH MIDDLEMAS:
Politics in Industrial Society
The Experience of the British System since 1911
512pp. André Deutsch. £14.95.
0 233 97129 7

Twenty years ago historians of British politics usually broke off the story at 1914, and the last words on the subject belonged to Elwin and Halévy. The new directions of the late Victorian and Edwardian era could be pursued only as far as the great road-block of the First World War, and if they were pointers to a new age, it was an age which could only be glimpsed from afar. But since about 1960 the road-block has been removed, and historians have swept forward into the heartland of twentieth-century politics. By now a bibliography of their work would fill a substantial volume, but strange to say the master-problem of political history—the development of the constitution—has been conspicuous by its absence. Marxists have had something to say about it, but on the whole political historians have concentrated either on policy-making and ideology, or on particular institutions such as party organization. For models of the political system as a whole we have had to turn to historically minded political scientists like Samuel H. Beer or John P. Mackintosh. So it is hardly an exaggeration to say that Keith Middlemas is the first historian to grapple with the dynamics of constitutional change in the twentieth century. The attempt alone is guaranteed to shake up the historiography of the period for it necessitates a discussion of fundamentals. From now on, historians will have to make up their minds as to how far they agree with *Politics in Industrial Society*.

Middlemas contends that most of us—not just historians, but the political public—have been the unwitting victims of obsolete constitutional doctrines. We have, in other words, been applying nineteenth-century notions to twentieth-century realities. Our assumptions derive from the period when "parliamentary democracy" triumphantly established itself as the form of government. In the Victorian era, it was through the parliamentary system—the Cabinet, the House of Commons, the constituencies, the electoral process—that the political nation resolved its differences and governments obtained the consent of the governed. And at every level the key power-brokers were the political parties, which thus rose to power as the supreme institutions of government. In the twentieth century the Victorian system has, to all intents and appearances, remained intact. But unacknowledged there has grown up alongside it an alternative system of power based on three major institutions: a powerful and secretive civil service, the trade unions, and the employers' associations. Like all bureaucracies, the members of this trinity have a powerful vested interest in stability and the avoidance of crisis. They have therefore a built-in tendency towards mutual accommodation or "institutional consensus".

The new system is inevitably the rival of the old. For the representation of voters and interests through Parliament it threatens to substitute the functional representation of corporate interests. For the open competition between parties for popular support it threatens to substitute the perpetual management of opinion by Whitehall. For government policies based on the programmes of political parties it threatens to substitute "continuous contract"—a series of bargains between the three great bureaucratic interests. Finally it threatens to reduce the function of the Cabinet from policy-making to power-broking and mediation.

En route to these conclusions Middlemas has borrowed freely from the theory of the corporate state. But the effectiveness of his approach lies in the ingenuity with which he has tailored the theory to the peculiarities of the empirical British. According to the logic of corporatism, society consists of a diversity of groups defined by economic function; so Parliament should be replaced by an assembly which openly and formally acknowledges functional interests. Such ideas were, of course, in circulation in Britain between the wars. Winston Churchill was among those who followed the Webbs in advocating an "Economic Parliament". But Middlemas maintains, the British scorned the theory while furtively pioneering the practice. The first to stumble on corporatism, they set it up in an incomplete and illogical fashion. If Middlemas is right, his thesis harmonizes wonderfully with the general tenor of British history since the seventeenth century: great innovations brought about in a fit of absence of mind.

More than three quarters of his book is devoted to a close study of the period from 1911 to 1945. From a technical point of view he gets off to a shaky start, for he is not altogether sure of events up to 1918; but these blemishes soon fade into the background as the ground-plan emerges. Party political interpretations of the first half of the century stress the rise of Labour and the consequent ideological divide (The General Strike, Munich) between the parties of labour and capital. This approach reaches a grand climax with the Attlee government of 1945, interpreted as a model party administration which carried out all the pledges contained in its manifesto. But according to Middlemas the underlying trend was towards the consultation of party and ideology. The shop-floor revolt of the period 1911-21 impelled the Cabinet and the civil service to discover new techniques, including a secret propaganda apparatus, for the containment of industrial conflict. Seeking agents of control within industry itself, they eventually found them in the newly organized National Confederation of Employers (1919) and the General Council of the TUC (1921). Through a series of contacts and understandings these organizations were gradually built up into permanent consultative bodies or, as Middlemas terms them, "governing institutions". Even in the ideological 1930s the "corporate bias" of the National Government was apparent in its defence preparations, and the war economy of 1939-45 brought with it a tripartite machinery of planning and profound consensus about postwar policy. The unseen foundation of the Attlee administration was, therefore, a cosy collaboration between industrialists, trade unionists, and civil servants. So much for *Let Us Face the Future!* Middlemas ends his history proper in 1945 but in a concluding sketch of events since the war plots the decline and fall of corporate consensus since the mid-1960s.

The book's analysis is much more complex than a summary conveys: safeguarded by crucial reservations, and supple in relation to changing circumstances. But with all its subtlety, how convincing is the general effect? Initially Middlemas does historians and political scientists less than justice by attributing to them an Asquithian model of the constitution. The bargains which economic interest groups could strike with government were understood long before Harold Wilson's "social contract". The power and scope of the civil service was appreciated long before the publication of Crossman's *Diaries*. Most observers probably assumed in practice a pluralistic model, designed to take account of a great variety of extra-parliamentary interests and pressures, but still allotting primacy to a Cabinet based on a political party. They would have agreed with Richard Rose in his book *The Problems of Party Government*:

> Pressure groups offer the classic alternative to party as a means of voicing the views of sections of the electorate . . . the views of the Confederation of British Industries and the Trades Union Congress will always be listened to by the government of the day, because these bodies represent standing interests in society. The undoubted importance of pressure groups does not argue against the importance of party as a countervailing influence. Given the relatively centralized nature of British government, the ruling party usually arbitrates the competing claims of pressure groups to define the "national" interest; in doing so, it asserts its own influence.

There is still much to be said for this model. It is, after all, difficult to construe employers' organizations or the unions as "governing institutions" on a par with party. In both world wars the introduction of a planned economy brought industrialists and union leaders into government as administrators, and temporarily created the illusion of a corporate future. But with the return of peace, governments retreated from direct management of the economy, and the "two sides of industry" were relegated to consultative status. Their opinions were sought on matters affecting their interests, and both sides could exert a negative influence if policies offended them. But there remains a gulf between the right to lobby the Chancellor before the budget, and the power to determine its contents.

Another problem, with which Middlemas wrestles manfully, is that neither the General Council of the TUC nor the employers' organizations possessed corporate authority in industry. We may well suspect that, given the opportunity, Lord Weir and Sir Walter Citrine would have sat themselves up as twin oligarchs and governed the country. But neither had the authority to bind his constituents, the individual employers and unions. The restraints imposed by class conflict, however ritualized, were also powerful. Middlemas argues that it was the development of corporate bias which minimized class conflict between 1921 and the 1960s. But this may be putting the cart before the horse. It may only have been as a result of the fact that industrial relations were relatively quiescent on the ground floor that corporate understandings were able to develop at a higher level. If so, corporate tendencies were highly vulnerable.

Since the mid-1960s we have seen both major parties imposing unwelcome policies on both sides of industry. Mr Middlemas is inclined to explain these events in terms of a deliberate effort by the parties to recover their "lost dominion". An alternative explanation might be that the parties never truly lost their primacy in the first place: the system of "corporate bias", though influential up to a point, had remained subordinate to the party system.

One final consideration can be urged in defence of the role of parties and the electorate. In a managed economy, with its vast entanglements between Whitehall and producer groups, representations of one face of the modern state. There is also the "welfare state". In the politics of welfare many interests and pressures have come into play, including civil service power and the susceptibilities of unions and employers. But the integrating role has been played by parties bidding for electoral support. The growth of the social services cannot be accounted for by a model of "corporate bias", and welfare benefits were granted to all, not just to the membership of . . . pressure bureaucracies. The politics of welfare have, therefore, enhanced the function of parties. This is a point made by Beer in his *Modern British Politics*, where he distinguishes two separate power-flows originating from the two main aspects of the state:

> (1) Controlled economy: producer groups: functional representation: bargaining for co-operation and
> (2) welfare state: consumer groups: party government: bidding for votes.

While reservations have to be made, they should not obscure the excitement and importance of this *Politics in Industrial Society*. Constructively ambitious and versatile, and awash with new data, it is an experience as refreshing as a plunge into the sea on a hot day. It is the most challenging book so far attempted on the political history of twentieth-century Britain, and in critical respects the challenge succeeds. A corporate state in embryo has been located and defined for the first time. The concepts of "corporate bias" and "continuous contract" have been matched against the archives and shown to work. No simpler faiths which cling to parliamentary processes have been subjected to a chilling blast of scepticism. The Middlemas thesis is safe to forecast, will colour all future discussion. And while its constitutional problem is likely to remain one of the great open questions, Middlemas will deserve all the credit for posing it in the first place.

A consociational future

By Christopher R. Hill

F. VAN ZYL SLABBERT and DAVID WELSH:
South Africa's Options
Strategies for Sharing Power
210pp. Rex Collings. £6.95.
0 86036 1179

South Africa's Options is by two distinguished members of South Africa's Progressive Federal Party. David Welsh is Associate Professor of Comparative African Government and Law at the University of Cape Town; F. van Zyl Slabbert is the recently elected leader of the party. He had previously been chairman of the PFP's Constitutional Committee, whose report was adopted as party policy in November, 1978.

The book, which owes much to the report, contains its main recommendations for a future political dispensation in South Africa. There is some comparative material about other plural societies, including Malaysia, Cyprus and the Lebanon, and an excellent critique of the constitutional proposals now before a select committee of the South African parliament. The writing suffers from jargon—mainly "consociationalism"; but perhaps this term is now so much in vogue in the literature of pluralism that it could not be excluded.

The authors' concern is not to write another "five minutes to midnight scenario", but to propose means for a peaceful and negotiated settlement in South Africa. At present, as they rightly point out, the costs of maintaining white domination are not unbearable; but they can only increase, and the hope must be that there will be a white government of sufficient vision to identify the crucial moment, and call a National Convention to negotiate a new constitution before the whites' backs are to the wall. The authors believe that whites have as much right as blacks to call themselves Africans, but that if they are to survive in South Africa they must forswear domination before it is too late.

The constitution they recommend would be federal, though they recognize the difficulties of federations; it would allow one man one vote on common rolls, but not in a unitary state, and peace between ethnic and other groups would be maintained by limiting contact between them. In other words, group differences would be acknowledged as in, for example, Nigeria and the Sudan, but ignored. In the words of Lijphart (a leader of the consociational school quoted by Slabbert and Welsh), "Because good social fences may make good political neighbours, a kind of voluntary *apartheid* policy may be the most appropriate solution for a divided society".

Slabbert and Welsh do not sufficiently define "consociational" techniques, though they illustrate them from the European examples of Austria, Belgium, The Netherlands and Switzerland. They are not confident that such techniques (of which the most important is negotiation between élites) will recognize that they stand to gain more from compromise than from obduracy) can be exported to South Africa—for the European exemplars are rich and the cleavages in society cut across one another, whereas in South Africa divisions of race, class and status all coincide. Apart from economic interdependence there are in South Africa few nodal points or "generators of social risk" to counterbalance the only too obvious divisions of society.

There is much plain speaking in this book. The authors believe that "... we are in the early stages of a war which, if not checked, will show an unbounded ferocity commensurate with the Algerian war of 1954-62 (here, perhaps, is unconsciously, they echo Patrick Duncan, who wrote something similar in the early 1960s): the crucial necessity is that the ruling group should issue invitations to a National Convention while there is still some chance that they will be accepted. How, exactly, the politically salient groups are to be identified is not easy to determine; the authors suggest that they might best be identified by a judicial commission (on the Pearce model in Rhodesia—1972) after all restrictions and bannings on individuals and organizations had been lifted.

Only a commitment to non-violence would be insisted upon from any participant in the Convention, because the authors consider (in my view wrongly, in the light of the recent Rhodesia conference) that it would be inconsistent to expect leaders to negotiate while their followers were engaged in guerrilla warfare.

Slabbert and Welsh insist (and surely they are right) that, whatever the Marxists say, race antagonism cannot be reduced to differences of class interest, though the two may coincide. They will not, at this stage, even guess how the groups represented at the Convention will define themselves, for that must be left to the operation of a free political process; but it seems reasonable to assume that they will be largely based on race. To guard against the obvious danger of domination by any single group, legislation by the Federal Parliament would be subject to veto by a 10 or 15 per cent minority. The decentralization of party organization and the lack of any single locus of power (since it would be divided between federal and state levels) would provide further safeguards.

Understandably, Slabbert and Welsh do not attempt to delineate the future states in the South African federation, though they point out that some states are bound to be richer than others, and attempts to redistribute wealth between states would, as always in federations, lead to conflict.

Therefore, a governmental commitment (well before the National Convention has negotiated the new constitution) to significant reduction in personal inequalities and access to "life chances" will be essential if a federal constitution is to be negotiated. On the other hand, a commitment to greater equality will not lead to socialism: "a society describing itself as 'socialist' is at the same time a democracy, as we have employed the concept in this book. . . ." This is a telling statement, particularly as the authors have not defined democracy.

Despite the weaknesses which could be corrected, like the failure to define key terms, and the very tentative nature of the proposals (apart from broad statements of principle), this is an important book, which deserves to be read by anyone involved with South Africa. One cannot cavil at the lack of detail in the proposals because it is perfectly reasonable, at this early stage, for the PFP not to seek to popularize; as the authors rightly say, the first step is for the South African government to recognize the necessity of negotiation.

It is heartening that the kind of thinking these authors represent is spreading in South Africa, not only among members of the PFP, indeed perhaps the major real hope for the future is that voices not very dissimilar to those of Slabbert and Welsh can be heard in the National Party itself.

South Africa (1949p. Oxford University Press. £16. 0 903450 16 X), Volume 7 in the World Bibliographical series, is compiled by Reuben Musiker, Professor of Librarianship at the University of the Witwatersrand. South Africa is reputed to be the best-documented country in the African continent, and this is amply reflected in the scope of this volume, which gives more than 1,000 separate items of information on numerous aspects of the country. The emphasis is on works in English, though Afrikaans sources are given where appropriate. Arrangement of the material is by subject headings, in conformity with previous volumes in the series.

Furrowing the young brow

By Stefan Collini

ELVIN RICHTER (Editor):
Political Theory and Political Education
203pp. Guildford: Princeton University Press. £7.60.
0 691 07612 X

Several of the contributors to this volume clearly believe—fortunately, as it turns out—that no particular expertise is necessary or exclusively appropriate to the task of reading or reviewing it. For it is a collection of conference papers, written by some of the most distinguished contemporary political theorists, addressed to the question of "the place of political theory in the education of the next generation", and presupposing, according to the editor, "little more than a general interest in these subjects". The aim, as Michael Walzer puts it in his contribution, is to produce "a shared sense of moral concern. We should share about linguistic distinctions, and not very clever about beetles"), he splendidly vindicates the claims in this area of the best kind of philosophical analysis. He makes a persuasive case for why just falling back on regressive explanations about the "social origins" of ideas will not do: anyone familiar with some of the currently available exercises in the sociology of knowledge will recognize the justice of his remark that "they tend in fact to wander between the vague and the anecdotal", and may share his scepticism that "it is a marriage broker's optimism to suppose that the mating of reflexive philosophy with the consciousness of social reality gives reflexive social consciousness: as Bernard Shaw said to the actress, suppose it has your brains and my looks?" Williams also offers an interesting sketch of an argument about why the aspiration to develop any kind of univalently systematic moral and political philosophy may be misguided, and why political theorists therefore need "a combination of a mastery of the appropriate formal skills and a steady sense of the existence of genuinely competing and only partially reconcilable goods".

Unlike Williams's paper, John Pocock's does not actually instantiate the very technical language (indeed, as a subject where, inevitably, "la vérité reste dans les nuances", history does not really lend itself to the limited-over rules of conferences. But his dense and subtle paper says many good things about the salutary corrective to all overneat conceptual schemes provided by the "diverse and disorderly" matter of history. One of the staple ingredients in almost any politics syllabus is a course in the history of "political theory", and Pocock surely earned his conference expenses simply by declaring, with an authority commensurate with his standing as a historian, that "I do not think that political philosophy possesses a unified and narratable history, or that the efforts of those who disagree with me to prove otherwise are likely to provide legitimate paradigms for the ensuing paideia". In practice, what we call duty instead is a canon of texts, written at very different levels of abstraction, each of which constitutes some abridgment of, polemic against, reflection upon, or other employment of a variety of political languages taken from a diversity of periods and cultures. These texts are then arranged into "majestic schemes of general development", which are for the most part little more than philosophical mutton dressed up as historical lamb (though this does not mean that the study of such texts may not be one of the best ways of meditating on the problems of political theory).

But Pocock's argument is more wide-ranging and interesting than the by now familiar exhortation to study the history of political thought historically (though it is familiar, then part of the credit for making it so belongs to Pocock himself). He also tackles the more difficult question of the extent to which we can and must practise political philosophy historically, and with no little panache he holds to a delicately precise position between indicting on the claims of historical sensitivity and protecting the rights of philosophical enquiry. He certainly does not advocate any fashionable form of historicism, but rather maintains that "an essential ingredient of coping with the historicist is the ability to know your own history and to know and conduct yourself in it". Acknowledging that the most prevalent form of historicism has developed "a highly complex and subtle language", he insists all the more strongly that "if we are not to be taken captive by it, we need one of our own, in which our awareness of our historicity is differently articulated". His conclusion, stated with uncharacteristic but self-conscious dogmatism, is that "if the next generation of political philosophers is historically ignorant and historically incompetent, it will be hopelessly vulnerable to the holistic scientists of the right and the holistic historicists of the left, who are more than capable of combining against it".

For all the merits of the other papers, one may discern in at least a couple of cases some direct relation between the absence of the virtues of the professional philosopher or historian and the presence of substantial amounts of unsupported assertion and coercive moralism. One of these cases, and to say, seems to be the paper by Sheldon Wolin. I say "and" because *Politics and Vision*, Wolin's learned and moving lament for one version of the Western tradition of political thought, first published just twenty years ago, is properly regarded as one of the classics of the business; and I say "seems" because I cannot quite reconcile myself to the idea that he is saying some of the things I take him to be saying.

His paper here is a plea for a style of political commentary which is informed by a political theory, and which is thereby capable of presenting a "critique" (blessed word) of a society as a whole rather than merely confining itself to more or less pragmatic discussions of particular "policy options". But in pressing this case, Wolin seems to slide from the suggestion that there are certain unpleasant features of any society's arrangements which do not sit well with its favoured self-description (which latter he equates, somewhat gratuitously and exaggeratedly one cannot but think, with "the official conception of reality"), to the conclusion that "every society embodies 'secret' principles which *cannot* be publicly professed" (my emphasis).

In other words, he begins with the very plausible empirical generalization that theoretically-informed criticisms of the nature of existing arrangements as a whole are extremely uncommon in the everyday forms of political commentary. He also proposes the interesting though more difficult sociological hypothesis that the distribution of power and wealth in these societies systematically discourages such criticism. But in the course of his paper he appears to convert these into an essentially epistemological claim about the limits of what can be thought (the role of his ideal commentator would be, ironically, "to combat the unthinkable"). This is a manner of argument of which Herbert Marcuse was the acknowledged master. In wanting to assert, what it would be the extremest naïveté to deny, that there are ways whereby the possessors of a certain kind of power can affect people's thinking other and more subtle than regular inspections by the State Thought Police, this style of argument always seems to end up eliding entirely the distinction between influence and coercion, and indeed between probability and possibility.

A slightly different manifestation of essentially the same intellectual habit appears when, in quite rightly pointing out that citizens do not all have equal power to benefit from procedures which are ostensibly universal in their application, Wolin remarks that "a fair trial means little to the person who cannot pay for a lawyer". But to see just how much it does mean one only needs to confront that person with the alternative of an unfair trial, or indeed no trial at all—which might well be his fate in a large number of states, past and present—not to mention exploring the whole question of what it "means" to an individual to be a member of a community in which the principles of a fair trial are publicly upheld, if imperfectly applied, compared to being stuck in one in which they are ignored or denied.

Wolin's central charge, to which he returns more than once, is that "the function of political commentary is to interpret the system so as to render its nature unproblematic". The status of this assertion is never made clear—it seems to be treated as a necessary truth for we are certainly given no indication of where and when it has applied if it is a contingent one—and it is correspondingly unclear how we might go about trying to determine its truth or falsity. Notoriously, claims about "social functions" are logically dependent upon some specification of the "nature" and "end" of social wholes, which specifications have proved to be, to put it mildly, rather elusive. There is anyway no reason to think that people do always receive just one set of "messages" from their society—and certainly nothing as homogeneous as "*the* official conception of reality"—nor that all of the people believe all of the messages all of the time. It is curious that a manner of social theorizing which glories in the label of "critical" should so often seem to be suggesting that the only alternative to something grandly if obscurely described as rejecting the present system must be to swallow any old bunkum which politicians and journalists happen to hand out.

Mihailo Markovič's paper exemplifies another and, in its way, more intriguing development in contemporary political thought, remarked by Kolakowski and others, whereby nearly all of the traditional problems of political theory, and even of philosophy more generally, are restated in a vocabulary ultimately deriving from Marx's critique of Hegel. In these terms, Markovič's case for a decentralized, self-developing, participatory Socialism is recognizably an eclectic mixture of elements drawn from the Anarchist and Utopian traditions, together with a Pluralist appreciation of the need to confront that person with the alternative of an unfair trial, or indeed no trial at all—which might well be his fate in a large number of states, past and present—not to mention exploring the whole question of what it "means" to an individual to be a member of a community in which the principles of a fair trial are publicly upheld, if imperfectly applied, compared to being stuck in one in which they are ignored or denied.

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Thus, Markovič repents that "Marxists have not paid enough attention to the problem of protection of the rights of minorities" (Marx, of course, was capable of being contemptuously dismissive of anything which smacked of petit-bourgeois rights-mongering), but he blithely proposes that the problem can be "solved in its most general form". All you need, it turns out, is either to give minorities some sort of veto power, or else "the issue will be decided not by vote but by *agreement*, involving negotiation and necessary compromise on all parts" (his emphasis). Nice work if you can get it, this political theory.

This capacity for calling questions answers is also evident in Markovič's brisk and unblinkingly confident response to the little question of "how do we choose the ground on which all our political thought and indeed all social theory rests?". Well, we just have to specify "the basic, *desirable*, universal human capacities" (his emphasis), and these, in case they had slipped your mind for the moment, are

> the existing potential abilities of each individual worth developing, encouraging, reinforcing—faculties to cope with all kinds of unexpected new situations, to think and solve problems, to introduce purposeful novelties into one's already structured activity, to create and interpret extremely complex symbols, to cultivate one's senses and enormously enrich one's sensory experience of the world, to harmonize relationships with other individuals of a human community, to develop a critical consciousness of one's own past and present life.

Aside from being reminiscent of that oozingly unctuous literature put out by the worst kind of private school, this way of putting is chiefly objectionable as political theory

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because, however well-intentioned, it involves a kind of moral bullying which refuses to consider the limitations of human existence, including the limitation that some of these values may actually be incompatible with each other.

Markovic goes on to assert that in so far as our lives fall short of this morally bionic existence (as everyone's, of course, more or less strikingly does), it is because we live in "a class society". There is a blandness about this which is almost culpable, especially in view of his further claims that these vaguely specified "anthropological concepts" are "now the ground for a radical critique of existing forms of political life and political institutions". No doubt, and not just "existing" arrangements either: but without any further reflections upon the intractable problems of morals and politics, such a "critique" could command no greater purchase upon our intelligence than the lament that, horticulturally speaking, the gardens in my road are not a patch on Adam and Eve's.

Apart from its effect upon our standards of self-indulgence, this way of talking may not exactly help to make our political surroundings more congenial. Consider Markovic's ideal of a "Marxist procedure of justification" in politics: "A concrete individual decision (for example, to join a guerrilla unit) becomes meaningful and valuable in terms of the goals and personal preferences of that guerrilla movement, and those goals and preferences would be considered historically progressive or conservative from the point of view of universal human emancipation and self-realization". Yet if, as a member of the Oppressed-Readers-of-Contemporary-Political-Theory Liberation Army, I were to kidnap Professor Markovic, demanding as ransom the freeing of all thoughts from the hegemony of cliché and gobbledygook, he might, apart from any more personal discontents, have some reservations about the evident disparity between our means and my ends. And were I to retort that that only showed that he, like everyone else who failed to support my demand, was ideologically committed to the maintenance of the international hegemony, he might begin to feel that it was not my education in political theory alone that was deficient.

Doing as nature intends

By R. C. S. Walker

BRUCE AUNE :
Kant's Theory of Morals
229pp. Guildford: Princeton University Press. £9.35 (paperback, £2.80).
0 691 07238 8

Kant owes his enormous importance as a moral philosopher, and his enormous influence on the development of moral thinking, in large part to the fact that his moral views are so obscurely expressed. His best-known work in moral philosophy, the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, is also in some ways his most misleading. It was designed as a popular introduction, or as a complete statement of his position, and Kant had an absolute genius for the heuristic oversimplification that twists and distorts. For this reason a variety of misunderstandings of it are current, some of them fundamental. Countless readers, for example, have come away with the impression that the famous Categorical Imperative, "Act only on that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law", is intended all by itself to provide us with a sufficient guide to moral conduct. That this impression is mistaken is made clear by a reading of Kant's other works, particularly the *Metaphysics of Morals*; other ideas, notably those of rationality and of natural law, have an important part to play in deriving specific obligations and prohibitions. Until fairly recently, however, writers on Kant in English have shown a regrettable lack of familiarity with these other texts.

Bruce Aune's excellent book is in no way open to criticism on this account. Aune knows his material well, and his aim in *Kant's Theory of Morals* is to elucidate the *Groundwork*, with the help of the rest of Kant's writings. In this aim he is very successful. In five of the four of his six chapters he goes through the argumentation of the *Groundwork* in detail, providing a careful examination of what Kant says of how his various formulations of the Categorical Imperative relate to one another, and of why he thinks his premises lead to his conclusions (a matter that is often, indeed usually, left somewhat unclear by Kant himself). The remaining two chapters concentrate more directly on the *Metaphysics of Morals*, and on the distinction between duties of justice and duties of virtue which is worked out there — though it is worked out by no means consistently, as Aune shows. This distinction is not drawn explicitly in the *Groundwork*, but it lies in the background and illuminates some of the things that are said there. Moreover, besides giving Aune the opportunity to provide us with a useful introduction to Kant's philosophy of politics, these chapters enable him to examine Kant's reasons for thinking one has an obligation to pursue one's own perfection and the happiness of others.

The obligation to promote the happiness of others is the obligation to promote their objectives so far as these objectives are morally acceptable; it is in fact just this, Aune argues, that is what is meant when he says in the *Groundwork* that we have a duty to treat people as ends in themselves. But in the *Groundwork* he says little to explain why he thinks we have such a duty. In the *Metaphysics of Morals* he argues for it more fully, though not, as Aune shows, more adequately. He claims that it would be irrational selfishly to will that one should be happy oneself, a goal that is likely to require the cooperation of others, without being prepared to will the happiness of others, which may require assistance from oneself; but (like many other moralists) he fails to show what would be irrational about it.

Aune does not give us a full-scale discussion of the notion of universality which Kant uses in formulating the Categorical Imperative; this is my main point of criticism. But it is not much of a lack, for the matter has been well treated elsewhere. In general he does not seek to make an original contribution to philosophy: he is more concerned with examining and criticizing Kant in detail than with attempting to develop a position that would be subject to fewer difficulties. He treats Kant's views sympathetically, but he shows them up — in my opinion quite rightly — as inadequately worked out and poorly defended. One of the best features of the book is the way it brings out Kant's reliance upon his conception of nature as a teleological system in deriving concrete obligations from the Categorical Imperative. Deviant sexual practices, for example, are wrong because they do not accord with the purposes for which we have the sexual instincts. Similarly, those objectives of other people which we have a duty to promote are just the ones that do fit in with the purposes of nature. As Aune points out, this idea can be of considerable value to those who do not know what nature's purposes are.

The book is too thorough and careful to be read at speed, and too detailed to be ideal as an introduction to Kant. But for students of the *Groundwork*, and of Kant's moral philosophy in general, it will be extremely valuable.

The poetry of blight

By Frances Spalding

WENDY BARON :
The Camden Town Group
405pp. Scolar Press. £35.
0 85967 317 3

If today Camden Town painting looks a restrained, tasteful and very English form of Post-Impressionism, its original intention was to challenge conventional ideas of beauty. It attempted, in both style and subject matter, a new reality. Directed at the start by Sickert, who blamed the decadence of Edwardian art on "puritan standards of propriety", it reflected his distrust of taste; it treated the backs of London houses with the same reverence that had previously been reserved for picturesque scenes. In practice it tended to overplay the balancing of purples with greens. It produced an honest art but one which celebrated the factual rather than that which Sickert persistently urged, the rendering of the "magic and poetry" which those who lived "in the most wonderful and complex city in the world . . . daily see around them".

Sickert, who moved happily in and out of the cream of society, first began to praise dim, forgotten corners of the city in his catalogue introduction to the "London Impressionists" exhibition in 1889, with which this book begins. Five years later he made a practical demonstration of his beliefs and moved his studio from picturesque Chelsea with its artists' enclave to unaesthetic Camden, an area blighted by the arrival of the railways and the three termini, Euston, St Pancras and King's Cross. Formerly elegant and middle-class, Camden Town had become noisy, dirty and inhabited by a shifting working-class population. Yet Sickert's choice of milieu determined the title and much of the subject matter adopted by the group formed seventeen years later. He is said to have averred that his tears had so watered the district that something important would sooner or later spring from its soil.

Wendy Baron's introduction charts the course of events, the chance meetings, pre-arranged introductions and art politics, that welded disparate artists into a concerted group. Sickert, having first demonstrated his love of political manoeuvring and polemic at the "London Impressionists", returned to England in 1905 after almost seven years' absence in Dieppe, and soon took up again a leading role among a younger generation of artists.

By 1907 he had instigated the group which met on Saturday afternoons at his studio in Fitzroy Street, to show work to interested clients. The arrangements were informal but practical. The Fitzroy Street Group provided "little pictures for little patrons" in a contemporary observed. But Sickert's aim was greater than this. The co-operative commercial enterprise was to accustom people to modern art, "to create a Salon d'Automne milieu in London".

The membership of the group was never stable. New artists were drawn in from the Allied Artists' Association, a no-jury exhibiting society set up in 1908 which attracted unaffiliated artists. Thus Robert Bevan and Charles Ginner came to the attention of the Fitzroy Street Group which already included among its leading members Gilman, Gore, Lucien Pissarro and Walter Sickert. Drummond and Ratcliffe followed, while certain artists like Augustus John, Henry Lamb, J. D. Innes and Maxwell Lightfoot continued to hover on the periphery without any trace of Camden Town street-matter entering their work. Then in April 1911 the society transformed itself into the Camden Town Group, driven largely by the desire to establish a public exhibiting body that would challenge the increasingly conservative New English Art Club. Women were excluded, to ensure that an influx of artists' wives and lady friends did not lower the standards. Sickert now bluntly wrote to Ethel Sands and Nan Hudson of the Fitzroy Street Group, "There are lots of two sex clubs and several one sex clubs, each is one of them". To which there was no reply.

After only three exhibitions the Group merged with the Vorticist camp to found the London Group, whose first exhibition in March 1914 contained a strong Camden Town representation. Even to this date, as she herself admits, Wendy Baron's definition of Camden Town painting, as "the objective record of aspects of ordinary life in a basically Impressionistic style" no longer held true. The mosaic-like brushwork, which at first responded to the play of light, gives way to a broader technique, best seen in the 1912 landscapes, that is reminiscent of stained glass. Instead of focusing on the central figure or motif, the design and use of colour now spreads to the very edges of the canvas with a decorative emphasis that is Post-Impressionist. Yet just when Camden Town painting reaches maturity Wendy Baron's book ends, being confined to the period in which the Group as such existed. Because of this, masterpieces as Gilman's "The Mounter" and "The Eating House" and Ginner's market and factory scenes, are neither illustrated nor discussed.

Wendy Baron restricts herself to historical fact. Meetings, attendances, disputes and exhibitions are recorded with careful attention to circumstantial detail. Her method is impressive and unusual. If Sickert opened the discussion for example, seems to smack of the boardroom rather than an artist's get-together.) In the catalogue notes (which take up the greater part of the book) each picture is securely pigeon-holed, dated, and its provenance, analysed and discussed. Maps, charts, potted histories and check-lists of private and public collections contribute to the scholarly edifice. It provides an authoritative basis on which now be built an appreciation of Camden Town painting that pursuit of poetry among the derelict and the suburban.

In the Realist cause

By Ronald Pickvance

GABRIEL P. WEISBERG :
Bonvin
325pp. Paris: Geoffroy-Dechaume.

Any attempt to define Realism in French nineteenth-century painting must be dominated by a consideration of the works and personalities of Courbet, Millet and Daumier. In their different ways, they helped to shape the nature and limits of the movement; they extended the choice and treatment of subject-matter, and they redirected attitudes towards older art by their preference for Spanish, Dutch and French, rather than Italian sources. They took the critical brickbats, but also attracted defenders: Champfleury, Duranty, Thoré and Castagnary.

There were other artists whose achievements were less significant, whose roles were admittedly minor; and yet whose support of the cause of Realism helped maintain its momentum. Among these *peintres maîtres* were Bonvin, Ribot and Vollon. But the precise nature of their contribution remains unclear for the simple reason that their work has received little critical or scholarly attention, a last major book on Bonvin, for instance, was published by the indefatigable Moreau-Nélaton in 1927, and only in the past decade has he found a new champion in the American art historian Gabriel Weisberg, whose articles have contained the promise of an eventual monograph.

This is now with us, the first volume of a projected series from the publisher which will concern itself with other neglected French artists of the nineteenth century. It consists of a conventional essay on the life and work, presented year by year, with the text in French and English set in double columns on each page. This is followed by a checklist of works (again in French and English) a bibliography and an index. Dr Weisberg has rolled a great deal on Moreau-Nélaton, who was fortunate enough to have had access to Bonvin's "Carnets" now lost: also lost are Moreau-Nélaton's manuscript and his preparatory notes. But Weisberg has been able to refine the story in many places by consulting French national, local and private archives and by using correspondence unknown to Moreau-Nélaton — for example, letters to Champfleury. The result is that our knowledge of Bonvin, biographically and artistically, is considerably extended.

However, one result of Weisberg's chosen method of keeping life and work in tandem is that larger issues are not fully discussed. Bonvin's friendship and artistic relationship with Courbet, especially in the period 1846-52, when Realism was claiming its place, are not examined. Admittedly the paucity of documents and the very few surviving paintings by Bonvin from the Salons of 1847, 1848, 1849 and 1850-51 do not help. Again, Weisberg makes no attempt to define Realism as a movement — or Bonvin's contribution to it. Presumably he is reserving this for his forthcoming exhibition of "The Realist Tradition". Bonvin's patrons are mentioned, but the larger question of the patronage of realist art is not touched upon. How far did these collectors have a strongly realist *parti pris*? Did many of them combine this with the collecting of, say, Delacroix, or art in the way that Laperlier, perhaps most important early patron, also collected Chardin? Weisberg has been tireless in searching out Bonvin's work in American and European collections, and particularly diligent in bringing to light the many paintings in French provincial museums. All of them are reproduced in the valuable section of the book devoted to the checklist, paintings (more than 200) drawings and watercolours (some 125) and etchings (14). There is thus a basis for a *catalogue raisonné*, but many key works still remain lost or untraced. The illustrations are adequate; those in colour are generally better.

Writing in 1877, Bonvin described his sources:

> A bien dire, je n'ai guère eu de commencements, puisque, de suite, j'ai compris les conseils de maître Granet, renforcés de contemplations au Louvre et aux Espagnols et les Hollandais de ce temps-là, c'étaient les Espagnols qui m'empoignaient le plus; j'ai bâti plus d'une fois à mes émeutes de 1848, qui ont suivi naient des relâches, que je passor au Louvre, où j'ai presque seul, grâce à Jeanron, était directeur et de mes amis.

This last remark suggests that Bonvin had no strong political sympathies — Weisberg provides no evidence nor discussion of it. Bonvin had a vaguely defined friendship with Proudhon in the late 1840s; perhaps his friendship with several actors may be seen as an illustration of this, although there is only one actor-portrait in Weisberg's checklist and no theatrical scenes. His friendships are striking chiefly for their obscurity. The two lesser-known painters, Desoye and Bonnemaison, destroyed themselves estranged about 1860), deserve consideration: they included Guillaumet (friend of Cézanne), Daubigny, Daumier, Becquemond and Fantin. But he seems to have interested himself in only one of his colleagues. One curious aspect of his oeuvre is the number of times he showing women in church and more, nuns in their convents. Presumably this choice of subject was not spurred on by pious Catholic sentiments — it was one shared by certain other Realists, Legros, Amand Gautier, Jacquemart, who may well have resided in Imperial and State patronage. Bonvin, who, unlike Courbet, appears not to have had quarrels with either Church or State.

The architectural drawings of the Collection of King's College, Cambridge: A catalogue and historical survey of the major project drawings of the 18th and 19th centuries by Allan Doig, has recently been published (160pp. Avebury Publishing Company, Amersham, Buckinghamshire. £24. 0 86127 507 2). There are fifty-five plates, representing the work of Hawksmoor, Gibbs, Wyatt, W. S. Inman, Vulliamy, Wilkins, Sir Geoffrey Burges, Street, Fawcett, and others, and including some unsuccessful entries for a competition in 1841 for the new Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.

AMERICA

Documents of discovery

By Carl Bridenbaugh

DAVID B. QUINN with ALISON M. QUINN and SUSAN HILLER (Editors) :
New American World
A Documentary History of North America to 1612
Five volumes: 486, 594, 494, 454, 672pp. 148 maps. Macmillan. £250 the set.
0 333 26383 9.

Between 1598 and 1600 Richard Hakluyt the Younger published three great folio volumes of *Voyages, Navigations, Trafiques and Discoveries of the English Nation, and in some few places, where they have not been, of strangers, performed within ... these three hundred yeeres, to all parts of the Newfound World of Americe...*. James A. Froude felicitously characterized the collection as the prose epic of the English nation; 380 years later David Quinn, Alison Quinn and Susan Hiller have provided us in *New American World* with a twentieth-century Hakluyt, more comprehensive and much broader in scope than the earlier work. We may say at once that for our time this is a major accomplishment in British historiography.

The sumptuous edition in five volumes, handsomely printed and bound, and cased in truly elegant wrappers, is subtitled "A Documentary History of North America to 1612". It contains 851 documents, 148 maps, a bibliography, and an extensive and learned commentary by Professor Quinn. The project originated with the (venturesome) editors of the Arno Press, a subsidiary of the *New York Times*, which only recently published a facsimile edition of Samuel Johnson's *Dictionary*.

Although the price of the set, £250, places it far beyond the reach of most general readers, students, and scholars, the work is so impressive, so useful, and so well presented, that its appearance requires that the public at large at least be notified of its existence and made aware of its importance. Only a very few collections in the United Kingdom and the United States, such as those of the British Library, the John Carter Brown, and the libraries of Harvard and Yale, have large holdings of original materials pertaining to the discoveries, and the Quinn volumes must immediately become an indispensable tool for all such libraries. And because many of the surviving documents were written in Latin or one of the Romance languages, the editors have provided English translations either carefully made by themselves or selected from others that come closest to the contemporary meaning. To have printed originals and translations on facing pages, as is often done in smaller editions, would have been desirable, but would have forced a drastic reduction in the number and variety of the documents included. The very size of this offering (2,600 pages) is one of its signal merits. Moreover, today nearly all European scholars and many general readers read English with some facility.

David Beers Quinn, Professor of History emeritus at the University of Liverpool and Vice-President of the Hakluyt Society, was a wise choice for editor. He is uniquely fitted for the task, for he is the unchallenged living authority on English discovery and expansion from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries and ranks with the leading scholars of the world who are concerned with the entire era of discoveries. His *England and the Discovery of America, 1481-1620* (1974), and his volume in the New American Nations Series *North America from the Earliest Discovery of First Settlements* (1977), testify to his mastery of the literature of exploration. Actually, the documents in *New American World* are arranged in exactly the same order as they were used in the latter volume, which thereby provides an authoritative and complete narrative commentary on them.

Upon opening these formidable volumes, the first impression one gains is of the discrimination, balance and comprehensiveness in the collecting and editing of the documents. Unlike Richard Hakluyt, Quinn is not just presenting a brief for his own country (though he does very well by it) but is, rather, fundamentally concerned that all of the European discoveries and explorers (Italians, Portuguese, Spanish, French, Dutch, and Danes) receive their just deserts.

In the second place, one is at once surprised and delighted as one discovers the amount and scope of the scholarly investigations into the Age of Discovery that have been undertaken on both sides of the Atlantic during the past half-century. The editor is as familiar as anyone with this corpus of knowledge, and, in the manner of Francis Parkman and Samuel Eliot Morison, has visited all of the principal and many of the out-of-the-way sites in North America to view the scenes for himself, as well as ransacking archives and libraries in England, Portugal, Canada, the United States, and Spain for new materials. He even apologizes to his audience for not seeking possibly important sources, especially in Italy, but also in Holland and Germany.

In a very long sentence, Quinn tells us that

> the intention in this collection has been to enable the person who has a vital interest in the beginnings of European activity in any part of North America to build up for himself a picture of how it began, how it changed from a discovery of some islands off the supposed shore of Asia to the long-continued scraping of the outlines of an endless coastline, to the penetration of an apparently limitless interior, to the exploration of its inshore waters for fish and its forest fringes for fur, to the tentative assessment of the quality of the land to support European life, to the first attempts to plant Europeans on North American soil, to the early failures and the first successes, to the beginning of what was to become, in spite of its natural inhabitants, a part of the European-speaking, European-living world.

Thus we have an "interim report" on the materials that have survived, from the time of Aristotle in the fourth century BC to AD 1612, when it is evident that European settlements in North America bade fair to become permanent. There are literary and pictorial sources, consisting of documents and maps taken from collections in Italy, Portugal, and Spain and published in translation; there are some newly-discovered ones from the archives, court files, notarial records, and various local repositories. Official documents, especially Spanish ones, bulk large and contribute substantially to the institutional history of discovery, exploration, and settlement. From local English and French collections come important fresh data concerning the beginnings of European economic activity in the new lands. What is professionally denominated "promotion literature" — the advertising of ventures in North America — is assembled and illustrated by English tracts and pamphlets. Personal narratives, journals, and letters are not as well represented as we might wish, but those chosen tell much about the human side of the European adventurers. Very wisely the editors have selected ample space to a miscellany of facts bearing on hitherto obscure incidents and undertakings.

Taken as a whole, the story of the first setting of North America resembles a huge mosaic. Many of the outlines have always been faint and frequently entirely lacking, but in a few places the design has been clear. The many new pieces provided in *New American World* when they are fitted into the mosaic, serve to fill out, clarify, and sometimes alter the images presented in the past.

Although this work, as the editors state, is chiefly a "word picture", at the end of each volume are a profusion of maps (with useful explanatory notes) that call for special comment. The 148 maps, all together, enable the present-day scholar to trace the slow, halting but continuous exploration of the coastline from Key West in Florida to Newfoundland and Labrador — the accomplishment of fishermen, mariners, and cartographers of at least five nations. Only recently have the key researches of W. P. Cumming, L. A. Vigneras, and other "historical geographers" made such a disclosure possible, and also opened a way for investigating the explorations in the interior of the Georgia-Carolina region. Close study of the cartographical evidence along with the documents is essential as one attempts to comprehend the entire process of the transit of civilization from Europe to America over the centuries. In this connection it is regrettable that each volume is not equipped with a fold-out modern outline map that would aid the reader in identifying both geographical features and the names of places — for example "Danse aux Meadows". In a day of declining study of geography and allied subjects in the schools, such a supplement is sorely needed.

The inevitable clash between the White Men from Europe and the Indians of North America looms large as one of the greatest tragedies ever recorded in history. Alas, it must always remain a half-told tale, because we possess only the imperfect, highly-biased record of the Christian Europeans whose parochialism, greed, and arrogance destroyed a way of life. The Indians have left no written records behind from which their story may be reconstructed. The ethnologists, anthropologists, and archaeologists have been reporting regularly and well about the Indian's "cultures", but they are unable to describe or analyse his sensations and thoughts about the white invaders. This is the major lacuna — and it is a mighty one — in any collection of documents about the New World. David Quinn is acutely aware of this deficiency in the record, for he is well versed in the literature about the aborigines and knows its limitations. Nevertheless he has provided much useful, though refractory, evidence to illustrate Indian life as it was seen by the first Europeans to reach North America.

Among the many new or newly-transformed features of this documentary history are several of particular interest to English readers that may be briefly commented upon. Volumes One and Three contain many documents discovered by Quinn himself, which, along with those of J. A. Williamson and others, both amplify and extend the story of the English role in discovery, exploration, promotion, and ultimate settlement. There is evidence that as early as 1480 (twelve years before the first voyage of Columbus) English mariners were exploring the west-ern Atlantic and that the elder Robert Thorne and Hugh Elyot had discovered Newfoundland by 1497, if not earlier. Before 1513 the Scottish poet, William Dunbar was blaming, in print, "the Waraldis Instabilitie" on the new voyages and discoveries:

> It micht have cumin in schortur quhyll
> Fra Calvpecot and the nu fund Yle,
> The partis of Transmeridiane;
> Quhilk to consider is any pane.

It is now clear that the Cabots, Thornes, John Rastell, John Rut, and Richard Hore, among the leading merchants and mariners, kept England in the van of maritime enterprise and western discovery without much official encouragement up to 1536.

In Volume Three are gathered plans for colonizing North America in which the English excelled and were most active after 1565. The enormously important promotion tract, *The Discourse of Western Planting*, written by the younger Hakluyt for presentation to Queen Elizabeth (at the instance of Walsingham) in October 1584, which has hitherto been almost inaccessible, is printed here in full. The same is true of Thomas Harriot's "a brief and true report" on Virginia, 1588, which was later taken up by Hakluyt and illustrated by Theodore de Bry from Harriot's MS. Main for publication in Latin, English, French and German.

The broad outlines of the economic side of the discoveries and explorations have long been reasonably well known, but the details are only now being unearthed and fitted into the story. Much more needs to be done on this score. Volume Four contains a treasure-trove of new and valuable data bearing on the trade in Newfoundland by the English, Basque, Portuguese and French cod-fishermen and whalers, as well as sources for the study of the little understood shift from the fisheries to the fur traffic, first pointed out by H. P. Bigger. From the time that the Vikings made their settlement at L'Anse aux Meadows in the Strait of Belle Isle, Newfoundland is seen as the centre of the struggle over north-east North America.

In many respects the most interesting maps and documents are those in Volume Two, which are skilfully arranged to illustrate and explain the complex nature of the contacts of the French, Spanish, and English, and also the Indians, along that part of the south-east coast to which the Spanish gave the name of Florida. It extended from Sint Agustin north-eastward to Chesapeake Bay. One can learn from the Spanish documents much about the Indian tribes, their warfare, location, modes of living, and economy as reported by the Dominican and Franciscan missionaries. This fresh and fascinating story culminates with the failure of Raleigh's Roanoke Colony and the first successful settlement of the English at Jamestown. The role of the English from 1580 to 1612 is now the most complete that we have.

The New American World is a work to be studied rather than read for pleasure. The proportion of new documentary evidence is not large, but all of the selections have been made with discrimination and edited with appropriate care. By means of his arrangement of the documents by chapters, his introductions to them, and headpieces for individual tracts, charters, reports, letters, and journals, Quinn goes far beyond a mere substantial sampling of the old and recently recovered literary and cartographical sources for the history of the great European expansion into North America.

In effect he is outlining a new synthesis that needs to be fleshed out with many sub-interpretations. A learned Spanish, Portuguese, or French scholar might draw different conclusions from this same collection. Finally, it may be said that these documents *raise* nearly as many new questions as they provide answers.

As one peruses the personal documents included in these volumes, one comes closer to understanding these past centuries. They are often enchanting; men of action, sea-dogs and promoters, and contemporary reporters of the exploits, sufferings, and failures wrote a tough, lean prose that is direct and effective. Much of it was unconsciously literary, and the flair of the men of the Renaissance for words often excuses the wonder of the modern reader. Listen to the Reverend Richard Hakluyt on the Christian duty of Englishmen in new plantations:

> First learne the language of the [native] people . . . (the gifte of tongues being now taken away). and little by little acquainte themselves with their manner, and so with discretion and mylde sse distill into their purged myndes the swete and lively liquor of the gospell.

Scandinavia in the mid-west

By Esmond Wright

LARS LJUNGMARK :
Swedish Exodus
Translated by Kermit B. Westerberg
165pp. Carbondale, Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press. $11.95.
0 8093 0905 X

In the course of a century and a half, 35 million Europeans left their homes to settle in North America. Of that number, one and a quarter million were Swedes — in 1910 one fifth of the world's Swedes lived in America, and Chicago was, after Stockholm, the world's largest Swedish city. The Swedish emigration to the United States had a major impact on the country of origin as well as on the American Midwest, where Minnesota and Wisconsin, Illinois and Iowa, and secondary pockets further west, still retain in placenames and family histories, in Lutheran churches and large, carefully run farms, the characteristics of the mother country.

Lars Ljungmark's *Swedish Exodus* is the translation (and excellently rendered, it is) of *Den Stora Utvandringen*, which forms the basis of a course conducted in Sweden by its author. Its ten chapters serve as an admirable introduction to the subject and they are supplemented by a good, if selective, bibliography. It is clear that emigration to the United States, and thus the affairs of the United States, have become an integral part of the story of the Swedish homeland.

The Swedes were driven into exile, to a totally foreign land, by many factors: religious intolerance, lack of political freedom, fear of military conscription, the rigidity of Sweden's class system. But the strongest motivation, Ljungmark argues, was economic. America was the promised land of material success, as "the American letters" from those who had made it confirmed. and as occasional episodes such as the California Gold Rush of 1848 and, much more, the Homestead Act of 1862, dramatized. According to Ljungmark, "Emigration, in whatever shape or form, had no central impact on Swedish developments. The ultimate factor was the desire people had to improve their living standards."

Ljungmark emphasizes the importance of the timing of the waves of emigration. While there are some clear parallels between the native districts of emigrants and the areas in which the settled — rural emigrants moving to Iowa and Kansas, Vesternorrlands farmers going to the prairies, sawmill workers to the timberlands of the North-west — they were rarely looking for copies of the Swedish countryside. Swedes might find it easy to adjust to Minnesota but its scenic attractions had little to do with it. The mass Swedish emigration happened to coincide with the expansion of the American frontier, and the opening of prime farm land in the state of Minnesota. The same seems to be true of settlement patterns in other states.

Ljungmark focuses sharply on the charismatic leaders of the exodus, in the earlier part of the story: Peter Cassel, the liberal free-church and temperance leader who founded new Sweden on the Skunk River in Iowa, Erik Jansson the self-proclaimed messiah who founded the Bishop Hill colony in Illinois, Unonius the student whose Wisconsin experiment came to grief, and not least Hans Mattson, later a Civil War captain — a figure with obvious similarities to the German Carl Schurz.

The book would, in fact, be stronger if some of these pen-portraits had been sustained throughout, and Ljungmark could perhaps have made more use of diaries and letters. The emigration story, or at least Sweden, has been well chronicled, and there are travellers' accounts which could have been drawn on to enrich and to personalize the story of these hazardous and sometimes frightening journeys. The human dimension could have been increased by references, for example, to the accounts of people like Fredrika Bremer, who is mentioned only once, or of Alma Hedin, who is not mentioned at all. Ljungmark cites one young woman who wrote to her parents in very philosophic terms: "You write that you miss me very much. . . . But, pray, do not worry too much about me. I got along well in Sweden, and this being a better country, I will do even better here. . . . I never expect to speak with you again in this life. . . . Your loving daughter unto death, . . ."

It is a tribute to this admirable survey that one is left at the end wishing for more personal details of the fascinating adventures of these pioneers in a strange New World which they so readily and successfully made their own.

Revolutionary abstainers

By Anita Kermode

TAYLOR STOEHR :
Nay-Saying in Concord : Emerson, Alcott, and Thoreau
179pp. Hamden, Connecticut : Archon Books. $19.50.
0 20 301767 4

The stock-taking 1970s produced in America much scholarly searching of souls, and much probing of culture for signs of inherited weakness. Certain books come to mind, in which the words "we" "us" and "our" perform a crucial rhetorical role. Why are we made so anxious by the prospect of "growing up", or of failing to do so? How is a dread of arrested development, at once in the individual and in the nation, linked to our ambivalence about speaking any form of language committed to purposeful social change? And how is this dread pacified by the ability of American prophets (e.g. Cotton Mather, Emerson, Mailer) to reconcile an acute awareness of our political and cultural failures with a continuing faith in the redemptive historical mission of "America"? Why is saying "No", whether in thunder or by strategic retreat, still felt to be the best way of asserting, saying "Yes" to, our sacred American-ness?

Such questioning has elicited some of the strongest recent rereadings of the American literary inheritance as it bears down on the country's present unhappy circumstances. I think, for example, of Quentin Anderson's *The Imperial Self*, at the beginning of the decade, and Sacvan Bercovitch's *The American Jeremiad*, at its end. Both books try to explain, among other things, how it has happened that radicalism (in an actively revolutionary, "European" mode) is experienced as incompatible with the myth of being radically *American*. In both, Emerson's re-shaping of this myth is treated as decisive, so that learning to read him right becomes essential to understanding why, for Americans, a consciousness of our cultural failure is nearly indistinguishable from a sense of cultural victory.

Anderson, insisting on Emerson's tough-mindedness, respects him as a kind of heroic terrorist, a truly dangerous influence: Emerson's mauling of the immediate and the prospective murders time and kidnaps ideals, originally nursed in the manifold culture, into the imperium of the self. Once inside they have no future which is not that of the self, and no past. For Bercovitch, Emerson seals the fate of dissent in America: "Far from pressing the conflict between individual and society, Emerson obviated all conflict whatever by defining inward revolt and social revolution in identical terms, through the bipolar unities of the symbol of America." Bercovitch argues that the most radical native American criticisms of American culture have consistently been posed in a language which reaffirms that culture's basic tenets and values, thus assisting rather than hindering the continuing process of acculturation. And he includes Thoreau, lately one of America's most glamourized dissenters, as one of its most rhetorically effective upholders of the ritual of socialization.

I mention these patriotically unpatriotic renewals of the American jeremiad because it looks at first glance as if Taylor Stoehr's essay might belong among them and have something valuable to say about the problematic forms of dissent that Emerson and his associates not only preached but practised. Stoehr, too, addresses himself vehemently to the predicament "we" are in as the heirs of their idealistic non-commitment. He, too, seeks to disentangle our comfortable myths about the transcendentalist forefathers, e.g. they were naively optimistic escapists from the more complex and troubling myths that they themselves reflected and struggled with. If we (Americans) can correct our own distorted, over-simplified view of them, he suggests, then we may discover how they can provide for us "visible models" as we go on trying to grow up, to overcome the regressive seductions of excessive wealth, of the mass-media, and of our unfortunate addiction to novel-reading. (Stoehr is curiously bitter in condemning "narrative", so indulgent to "forbidden desires and mythic satisfactions". "At some point", he says darkly—here as elsewhere haunted by a bizarre but fragmentary plot of his own devising — "America was offered three choices: that of the communitists, that of the transcendentalists, and that of the novelists. We chose the last.")

But it soon becomes evident that Stoehr, too intensely caught up in a polemical mood ("Now more than ever we need to clear our selves, rein in and restrict ourselves!"), is deeply uncertain whether he has come to praise the transcendentalists or to expose them. Always alert to signs of "ambivalence" in his three exemplary figures, he gets so carried away by his own ambivalence about them that his argument keeps vanishing in a flux of qualifications. Even his title proves to be something of a red herring, since almost at once he implies that it belongs to "a false dichotomy": "The truth is that Emerson, Alcott, and Thoreau, rather than say aye or nay, were more likely to abstain entirely." This may or may not be so: the truth is that Stoehr never decides what he *means* by "nay". "Abstaining", in his book, sometimes means "revolutionary abstinence", consciously saying "No" to and indeed to all falsely limited positions. Sometimes it means a Tolstoyish withdrawal from a demanding situation, as when, misrepresenting the actual text of "Civil Disobedience", he claims that Thoreau's "interest in Mexico and Slavery was, as he said, an anxiety to get off the 'shoulders' of his fellowmen, so that he might go about his own business—to wash his hands of humanity's dirt." (Here selective quotation perverts the sense of what Thoreau did in fact say.) Although Stoehr likes to talk about "alternative" modes of consciousness, he never adequately defines to *what* they might be considered alternative. (To the "novelistic" imagination, he starts off by saying, but this also turns out to be a red herring.)

Emerson wrote, at a hard juncture in his life, "I am *Defeated* all the time: yet to Victory I am born." Stoehr doesn't quote this, but it bears on his theme. For he is trying to determine, by following their vexed relations to the various dissenting movements of the epoch, in what sense the transcendentalists' effort to arrive at "a new mode of thinking" and, concomitantly, of living, could be said to have succeeded by virtue of its failure. Its failure, that is, to amount to anything more than writing. And yet writing never quite counts, for Stoehr, as a new mode of doing anything, although here too, characteristically, he vacillates. But, instead of showing us how transcendental retreats from positive action might, after all, convert No into Yes, his book becomes itself an illustration of the negative point made by Anderson and Bercovitch: that the Emersonian tradition has supported the bad American habit of simply confusing one's defeats with one's victories. In the context of Vietnam and its aftermath, which is also the context Stoehr invokes, this is a point which needs to be argued rather than exemplified or acted out.

Although he has trouble sustaining any coherent view of his protagonists, Stoehr is good at the gossipy and anecdotal. From the letters and journals of Concord he produces a lively din of voices bouncing one off the other, complaining, tale-telling, making allowances, setting the record straight, in terrible response to the issues of the day and to each other's involvement in them. The issues, and the variety of reforming impulses they inspired, are presented more or less helter-skelter, without the perhaps disputed sense of their relative importance that hind-sight imposes. Stoehr likes to get up close. The questions of abolition, of division of labour, of marriage, of meat-eating, of summer-houses—all seem to demand equal attention from men who were struggling to keep their thought aloof and afloat, transparently in touch with Higher Laws, while having to bend to the need, which they strongly felt, of being good citizens and good neighbours. Being good at those things required speaking out shrewdly and roughly, but keeping up intimacy as well. How to practise prophecy in a neighbourhood of prophets: was a problem that much exercised them; it is the sort of problem that Robert Frost was to find intriguing.

The kind of vocal drama this situation evoked is Stoehr's real if unacknowledged subject. "Vocal drama, rather than "transcendentalism" is what Concord was all about, although he persists in referring to "the transcendentalists" and ignoring the ways in which his own account makes it almost impossible to think of them as an intellectual group with shared positions on anything. And he has a right to single out the Concord anxiety about "eloquence" as the best clue to understanding the slippery relations "between saying and doing" in his revolutionary abstainers. To be eloquent means to imagine an audience; and the question of who was addressing whom is paramount in all their writing: is one speaking as a neighbour and citizen to other such, in the hope of waking them up? Or is one speaking as the voice of the Soul, from some "abode in the deep blue sky" (one of Emerson's preferred dwelling-places for the unrealized Central Idea of future)?

Eloquence, furthermore, is putting a bias on your pitching a curved ball inspiration—something Thoreau with relish and Emerson with mutual nervousness lest he himself mitted himself to an exaggeration (Alcott wanted to play the of bull but wasn't up to it) whose portrait of him is tragingly damaging, implies a connexion between weak and weak writing.) And eloquence, the power of vocal presence, means oneself with a "partial" and time-bound point of never on acceptable positive writers who longed to acquire authority they ascribed to loss than the Universe. thought is also a prison; heaven is also a prison". Emerson, whose most characteristic rhetorical gesture is the vacating of a position not yet occupied. But this he did with consistency and range that work offers a coherent map just about every "American" position either for occupancy or avoidance.

The same cannot be said of his *Saying in Concord*, which, departing from an argument the significance of pursuing it been grasped and measured. too bad, since Stoehr's next book, *Hawthorne's Mosses*, although also taking it in directions at once, provides doing so a valuable and fresh account of mid-nineteenth-century pseudo-scientific thought, demonstrates as well the far more than local significance Hawthorne's immersion in the popular culture of his time.

The notebooks are also in evidence in Edward Kessler's *Coleridge's Metaphors of Being*. This work illustrates all too clearly the problem of the modern critic faced with a body of writing that ranges from notes for lectures to private jokes, cries of pain, fragments of poems, and apparently disconnected notes on different subjects related perhaps only by its proximity on a page. The student must surely approach such material with caution when reading the notebooks to justify arguments about Coleridge the poet or thinker.

No such caution is evident in Professor Kessler's book, which sets out to raise the status of the fragment over the finished product. To do this, Kessler takes some startling liberties with Coleridge's text, such as concentrating on a few pages which is in fact a prose fragment arranged into lines and entitled by Kessler "The Eddy-Rose". The poem "Human Life" is praised on the peculiar grounds that, being of twenty-nine lines with a rhyme scheme only a little different from that of two sonnets printed one after the other, it is constructed of "two and a half imperfect Shakespearean sonnets" and much the better poem for being so. Well may the chapter in which this case is argued be entitled "Phantom" and the one following it "Limbo".

The book is an extreme example of the dangers involved in Coleridge studies now that the notebooks are becoming available. It is to be hoped that those daring to use them in the future will make proper use of them in judging Coleridge's importance as a poet and thinker.

The Rape of the Lock is the subject of the second volume, edited by William Kinsley, in Hayward and Press's new series of *Concepts in Literary Works in Context*, *The Setting* (283pp. Archon Books, Hamden, Connecticut, $20.00; 0 208 01793 3). The attractively presented book contains annotated facsimile editions from works related to the poem—Pope's "Homer, Ovid, Virgil, mock-epics like Boileau's *Le Lutrin*, and various other classical, biblical and contemporary materials including Addison's essays.

Justifying the jottings

By Rosemary Ashton

KATHLEEN COBURN :
Experience into Thought
Perspectives in the Coleridge Notebooks
95pp. University of Toronto Press. $7.50.
0 8020 5449 8

EDWARD KESSLER :
Coleridge's Metaphors of Being
202pp. Princeton University Press. £7.50.
0 691 06394 X

Kathleen Coburn's work is the text of three lectures delivered at Toronto University with the bold aim of persuading her audience to appreciate, even to love, the Coleridge of the notebooks, whom she, as their editor, knows better than anyone. It is a formidable task. Many of the notebook entries, with their frequent amendments and their syntactical obscurities, present difficulties of understanding. Coleridge's vast reading, his interest in a wide range of subjects, his gift for detailed description of experiences natural and "transnatural" (his word to describe phenomena such as his disturbing "sixth sense" about evil propensities in himself and others), all these are abundantly evident in the notebooks. But the entries do, of course, have the rough-hewn nature of fragments and first thoughts. Moreover, much of his guilt and self-deception about opium and Sara Hutchinson naturally found expression, direct and indirect, in his notebook jottings. Even with Professor Coburn's superb editorial apparatus, most readers find the notebooks a hard read and not always a rewarding one.

Yet Professor Coburn wants to persuade us that this daily jotting Coleridge is particularly "strong" one who displays "a certain toughness of mind, a scepticism, if you will, and over it all his original ways of relating one thought to another". The first lecture deals with his notebook habit of introspective questioning which characteristically moves outwards, as in the following example:

Of *Habit*—O how miserable this makes me, not only as recalling an evil *habit*, but as recalling one of its consequences—what glorious, original Notions I had of this untreated of subject 5 years ago—& nothing done:—& I understand it less now by far, than I did then—All the dim Analoga of Habit in Inanimate forms [as] either the Effect of some natural alteration in the substance of the thing—ex. gr. an old Violin as giving a mellower sound than new wood—or act only defectively, as the example of the leaf of long continuance—None of these seem to give a decent *Simile* for the increase (almost indefinite) of *Power* by Practice in a vital Being—the muscular motions of a capital Performress on the Piano Forte, or (O bless the hair white arms of dear departed Laura Montague!) on the Pedal Harp—& & &.—

Coburn is doubtless right to point out Coleridge's tendency to question both minutely and abstractly, and to seek analogies in the physical world for phenomena he has observed in matters psychological and moral. But like many of the entries quoted, this is a difficult piece of writing, frustrating the reader's desire to know the context. It illustrates perfectly the nature of Coleridge's private notebooks—the entries are personal, condensed, self-referring (sometimes encoded), and unelucidated because not intended for readers. Coburn makes no reference to the special problems we therefore face in dealing with them.

In her second lecture she finds evidence for Coleridge's "sceptical" habit of suspending contemporary judgment on "fringe" thinkers like Jacob Boehme, Paracelsus, and Giordano Bruno, whom most of his contemporaries dismissed unread. She shows Coleridge admirably struggling to find meaning in what seems the "utter darkness" of Böhme's writings, her case for Coleridge as a tough, independent thinker in the notebooks is undeniable; it is a matter of intellectual taste whether one agrees with her that "gold was separated from dross in each case". One might, after all, admire Coleridge's "open-mindedness" towards obscure thinkers without accepting his lenient view of them.

Where I think Kathleen Coburn claims too much is in her third lecture, in which she succumbs to the temptation to seek a finer coherence in these scattered writings, to see everything as related to everything else. Of course, in a certain sense everything is so related, and the notebooks have, I suppose, the inner consistency of any body of writing emanating from one mind; but to claim more strikes me as unnecessary and misleading. Here is Coburn's example, with her comment:

"31 March 1817. Highgate.—Monday Morning, six o'clock. *Ilen Pen* (Henry Gillman, 2 or 3 years old) resenting the being washed, in the nursery, opposite the drawing room in which I sit.
I will not say, that in our present religious controversies we are disputing about trifles. . . ."

One might think that the association (if any) was in the word *trifles*, which is italicized, little Henry Gillman's objections to the trifling business of being washed. But the entry goes on about Original Sin and man's alienation from God—

"We must be away from Him/for an omnipotent Father would never suffer an innocent Son to be tormented in his presence . . ."

Now Coleridge had a fatherly affection for Henry Gillman and a special understanding of him, a problem child, and I suggest (it is perhaps blasphemous)—that Coleridge could not bear hearing his screams over having a dirty face washed, and that this somehow linked up easily with God's suffering over the original filth of man. *Everything* is related to everything else.

Here is a straining after unity which makes a monolithic monster of Coleridge.

It is a pity that Professor Coburn, uniquely placed to lecture on the Coleridge of the notebooks, chose to ask too much in the way of admiration from her hearers. No doubt she, who self-confessedly "potted about" [illegible] after Coleridge ("*In Pursuit of Coleridge*, 1977) and undertook editing him as a labour of love, genuinely feels that it is "possible never to be bored" with the notebooks. Other readers may disagree. In doing so, they are not necessarily aligning themselves with the defamatory of Coleridge, from De Quincey to Norman Fruman; it is possible to admit that Coleridge, in his notebooks at least as much as in his public writings, is sometimes obscure, dense, unwitty, and unattractive, and yet find him [illegible] and stimulating thinker.

The notebooks are also in evidence in Edward Kessler's *Coleridge's Metaphors of Being*. This work illustrates all too clearly the problem of the modern critic faced with a body of writing that ranges from notes for lectures to private jokes, cries of pain, fragments of poems, and apparently disconnected notes on different subjects related perhaps only by its proximity on a page. The student must surely approach such material with caution when reading the notebooks to justify arguments about Coleridge the poet or thinker.

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The book is an extreme example of the dangers involved in Coleridge studies now that the notebooks are becoming available. It is to be hoped that those daring to use them in the future will make proper use of them in judging Coleridge's importance as a poet and thinker.

The moralist and the magician

By Gleb Struve

JON KARLINSKY (Editor) :
The Nabokov-Wilson Letters
Correspondence between Vladimir Nabokov and Edmund Wilson 1940-1971
304pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. £12.50.
0 297 77580 4

The publication of this fascinating volume was conceived during Nabokov's lifetime, and its editing entrusted to Professor Simon Karlinsky who in his introduction ensures the following words from Nabokov's unpublished 1974 letter to Wilson's widow Elena: "I need not tell you what agony it was rereading the exchanges belonging to the early radiant era of our correspondence".

That "radiant" era lasted until 1960, though the number of letters exchanged after 1956 began to dwindle perceptibly, and the letters became, as a rule, much shorter. Of the 264 printed in this volume, 227 belong to the period before 1956, while between 1956 and 1960 there were only thirty-five. There are no letters for the years 1961-63, but some may have been lost: those were the first years of Nabokov's life in Switzerland, after the fabulous success of *Lolita* had given him a chance to retire from his Cornell University appointment. (As Karlinsky points out, some letters for 1945-46 have also been lost or mislaid). A single letter from Nabokov to Wilson represents the year 1964. And in January of that year the two friends met for the last time, when the Wilsons visited Montreux, had dinner with the Nabokovs and treated them to "a big luncheon".

Then came the well-known quarrel, which arose out of Wilson's very critical article about Nabokov's "literal" translation of *Eugene Onegin* and which he himself characterized as "a sharp rejoinder to it, leading to a complete break in all relations, epistolary and personal. In the spring of 1971, on hearing of Wilson's ailments, Nabokov wrote a conciliatory letter to him which he (Wilson) says that he had reread "the whole batch" of their correspondence and that it gave him great pleasure "to feel again the warmth of your many kindnesses, the various thrills of our friendship, that constant excitement of art and intellectual discovery". Wilson replied immediately, saying how glad he was to get Nabokov's letter. He could not refrain, however, from making a couple of polemical quips. He was then preparing a volume of his Russian articles (*A Window On Russia*); in it, he said, he was correcting his own errors in Russian in his piece on Nabokov-Pushkin, but also citing a few more of Nabokov's "ineptitudes".

The same year he published *Upstate*, a book based on his Talcottville diaries. This included an account of his 1957 visit to the Nabokovs at Cornell, with references to some bickerings between them, a few mild sallies at Mrs Nabokov, a couple of factual inaccuracies, but nothing really offensive about Nabokov himself. Yet the latter chose to regard the story as an intrusion into his private life and protested against it in a letter to the *New York Times Book Review* (November 7, 1971), thereby, as one American reviewer of this correspondence put it, "publicly declaring an end to communication". There were no more letters, and a little more than six months after that Wilson died.

It is very doubtful whether Nabokov had ever heard Wilson's name, let alone was familiar with his critical work, before his arrival in the United States from Paris in May 1940. Wilson certainly did not know Nabokov's Russian novels (though he might have heard of them from Nabokov's cousin Nicolas, the composer, whom he knew well. It was indeed at the suggestion of Wilson's friend Vladimir Wrote his first letter to Wilson in August 1940. They met apparently the next month in New York, and the first exchange of letters the same year soon led to a close epistolary and personal friendship which was to last, with Nabokov's wife, Vera, as Wilson's last wife, Mary McCarthy, and after 1946 Elena Thornton. By April 1941, the form of address in the letters changed from "Dear Wilson" and "Dear Nabokov" to "Dear Bunny" (Wilson's nickname from his schooldays, used also by a few of his other friends) and "Dear Vladimir" (still later often replaced by the diminutive "Volodya"). Hence the title of Karlinsky's introduction: "Dear Volodya, Dear Bunny"; or, Affinities and Disagreements".

During Nabokov's first years in the United States Wilson did more than anyone else to try to make his new Russian friend feel at home in the American literary milieu. It was he who commissioned book reviews from Nabokov for *The New Republic*; who introduced him to *The New Yorker* and *The Atlantic Monthly*, both of which became eager to print his work; who helped him to get the Guggenheim fellowship; who urged his friends to review those of Nabokov's books which he himself did not sufficiently appreciate. Karlinsky's statement that "for all of Edmund Wilson's awesome scope as a literary critic, the one major writer whose reputation he did not help to establish or assert was, paradoxically, his close friend and correspondent Vladimir Nabokov" is only partly true.

Wilson certainly did help to establish Nabokov's literary reputation, but he did so mostly in ways other than reviewing his books. He liked very much Nabokov's first English novel, *The Real Life of Sebastian Knight*. He liked the book on Gogol and *Conclusive Evidence*, the first version of Nabokov's autobiography. He liked *Pnin*. Of Nabokov's Russian novels translated earlier he liked *Laughter in the Dark* and *Despair*, though he had reservations about both. Some of those which were translated later and published after the cooling-off of their relations he may never have read (Karlinsky seems to be convinced that he did not read *The Gift*), he did not wish to read them in the original until he had improved his Russian and read more Russian classics.

On the other hand, Wilson did not like *Bend Sinister* or *Lolita*. When he wrote to Nabokov about the latter, to sweeten the pill he enclosed a letter from his wife Elena who spoke very positively about it, as well as excerpts from a letter from Mary McCarthy who made some reservations but described her position as "mid-way". Wilson seems never to have reacted in any way to *Pale Fire* and found *Ada* "unreadable". In this latter view he was not alone: one of the best Russian émigré literary scholars and critics, the late Wladimir Weidlé, who very much liked Nabokov the Russian novelist and thought very highly of *Lolita*, both in the original and in Nabokov's own Russian translation, wrote in his obituary of Nabokov that while *Lolita* "remains music, muffled only now and then by something like the pizzicato of the violins repeating 'sexy-sex, sexy-sex, sexy-sex'"—and this, said Weidlé, "helped the sales very much without doing much harm to art"—in *Ada* "nearly all the music consists of such pizzicato and soon begins to sound quite unmusically".

The following passage from an early 1945 letter shows how much Wilson appreciated his personal intercourse with Nabokov: "Our conversations have been among the few consolations of my literary life through these last years—when my old friends have been dying, petering out or getting more and more neurotic, and the general state of the world has been so discouraging for what used to be called the humanities". And in that description of his visit to Ithaca which seems to have incensed Nabokov, after saying rather cruelly that the element which he found "repellent" in Nabokov's work was "his addiction to *Schadenfreude*", his constant humiliating of everybody, he went on: "And yet he is in many ways an admirable person, a strong character, a terrific worker, unwavering in his devotion to his family, with a rigor in his devotion to his art which has something in common with Joyce—Joyce is one of his few genuine admirations".

The disagreements between Wilson and Nabokov were many and covered a large ground. There were, of course, some political ones, though by the time they met these were no longer as pronounced as they would have been earlier, for by that time Wilson was cured of his Sovietophilia, even though he still continued to idealize Lenin (this, of course, was unacceptable to Nabokov who once, in a long letter, tried to enlighten Wilson with regard to Russian Liberalism and dispel some of his naive misconceptions about pre-1917 Russia).

Nabokov himself was a rather conventional liberal. He had a deeply rooted distaste for any form of totalitarianism. He had not personally experienced it in Russia, but he was more or less forced by circumstances to live for several years under Hitler in Germany. And nothing could induce him to return voluntarily, be it even for a short visit, to his native land where, as he said in one of his not very many politically oriented poems, "the Soviet tinsel glitters/Upon the canvas of a battle piece". He ended that poem significantly with the line "I'm still a poet, count me out!" With all his hatred of Soviet Russia and Nazi Germany he had no real political interests and concerns, and Karlinsky tends to exaggerate his political and historical understanding. I am more than surprised, for instance, to find Karlinsky associating Nabokov's *The Gift* with such novels as *Invitation to a Beheading* and *Bend Sinister* and seeing it as part of a trilogy about totalitarianism. *The Gift* may be, as Karlinsky believes, one of Nabokov's best novels, but its core lies elsewhere.

Much more important, in the context of their friendship and intercourse, were Wilson's and Nabokov's literary disagreements. Their approach to literature was quite different. For Nabokov the only thing that mattered in it was *wizardry*, or *shamanstvo* (shamanism); as he put it in Russian. He had no use for any of the sociological, moral or other interpretations which occupied Wilson. Their literary differences applied to both Russian and non-Russian writers, to those of the past as well as those of the present.

Of the Russian writers of the past the only ones who existed for Nabokov were Pushkin, Gogol (by no means all of his work), Tyutchev, Tolstoy, and Chekhov. His liking for Chekhov, quite unambiguously stated but never adequately explained (unless it was in his still unpublished lectures), has surprised many people; in some ways it is difficult to imagine two writers more fundamentally different even though Karlinsky, in an essay called "Nabokov and Chekhov; the lesser Russian tradition", has made a bold attempt to bring the two together. Of the major Russian writers of the past, Nabokov's *bête noire* was Dostoevsky. He usually dubbed him "Dusty". Once, after re-reading both Tolstoy and Dostoevsky, he wrote to Wilson that the latter was a third-rate writer and his fame "incomprehensible". A few years later, when he was lecturing at Harvard, he said that he was "twisting Dostoevsky's arm in a Russian literature class" (at Kafka (his knowledge of Kafka's work was, however, limited and he denied most emphatically that his own *Invitation to a Beheading* had anything in common with Kafka). Among contemporaries he recognized Samuel Beckett (minus his plays), Robbe-Grillet, John Updike. He dismissed as "frauds and fakes" (this was his favourite formula) such writers as Stendhal, Henry James, T. S. Eliot, and Thomas Mann. Balzac and Zola were for him outside literature. Wilson tried in vain to interest him in Malraux and in Faulkner, though he did succeed in getting Nabokov to read Dickens's *Bleak House* and to include it in his course on the European novel. Nabokov found it "great stuff" and he recalled that when he was in his teens his father, a great Dickens fan, used to read Dickens aloud (in English) to him and his brother. When Wilson also tried to do the same for Jane Austen who, for him, was, with Dickens, one of "the two incomparably greatest English novelists", Nabokov's first reaction was: "I dislike Jane and am prejudiced, in fact, against all women writers. Could never see anything in *Pride and Prejudice*." When Wilson, however, suggested that he ought to read *Mansfield Park*, Nabokov did so and adopted that too for his course. Whether he changed his overall opinion of Jane Austen and of women novelists remains unknown.

Nabokov and Wilson disagreed also about two outstanding recent Russian writers, Pasternak and Alexander Solzhenitsyn. Wilson had a very high opinion of *Doctor Zhivago* and wrote a great deal about it (it is true that some of the things he wrote were rather fanciful). Nabokov, whose opinion of Soviet literature was extensive, used to exempt from exclusion Pasternak's early poetry and such writers as Olesha, Zamyatin and Zoshchenko. Of *Doctor Zhivago* he had, however, a very poor opinion. For some reason (perhaps because by that time their literary disagreements had become too many and too obvious) he abstained from arguing about it with Wilson. But in a letter to me he called it "Putrid, talentless, false, and quite entr[illegible]beral", and expressed surprise that I could have been "carried away" by "the turgid Soviet[illegible] stream which is dragging it along".

As for Solzhenitsyn, Nabokov in Nabokov himself was once likened by the well-known Russian emigré critic, the late Peter Bitsilli, whose essay, "The revival of allegory", was deemed worth including in the Triquarterly volume of tributes to Nabokov for his seventieth birthday.

Among his contemporaries, Nabokov regarded Vladislav Khodasevich (1886-1939) as the best living Russian poet and he is mentioned several times in this correspondence. Nabokov overdame quite early his youthful infatuation with Alexander Blok, while his early enthusiasm for Ivan Bunin's prose cooled off with time. His interest in the poetry of Osip Mandelstam and Marina Tsvetaeva is not reflected in these letters: those were mere names to Wilson who knew little of modern Russian poetry. In *Speak, Memory* (this highly stylized autobiography is no less a work of art than Nabokov's novels), speaking of the Russian writers of his own generation, Nabokov says that the one who interested him most was, naturally, a certain Sirin who "among the young writers produced in exile turned out to be the only major one". It is now, of course, well known, and not only to the Russians, that Vladimir Sirin was Nabokov's own pen-name under which practically all his work of the Russian period was published. Those words (by the way, they are not to be found in the Russian version of the autobiography) may be seen as one of the jokes so inordinately loved by Nabokov; but they may also reflect what Wilson at the peak of their friendship described, in a letter to him, as his "insatiable and narcissistic vanity".

Similar "strong opinions" (this was to be the title of Nabokov's collection of critical articles and interviews) were voiced by Nabokov about many non-Russian writers. Again, only a few of them existed for Nabokov: Laurence Sterne, Flaubert, Proust, Joyce, Kafka (his knowledge of Kafka's work was, however, limited and he denied most emphatically that his own *Invitation to a Beheading* had anything in common with Kafka). Among contemporaries he recognized Samuel Beckett (minus his plays), Robbe-Grillet, John Updike. He dismissed as "frauds and fakes" (this was his favourite formula) such writers as Stendhal, Henry James, T. S. Eliot, and Thomas Mann. Balzac and Zola were for him outside literature. Wilson tried in vain to interest him in Malraux and in Faulkner, though he did succeed in getting Nabokov to read Dickens's *Bleak House* and to include it in his course on the European novel. Nabokov found it "great stuff" and he recalled that when he was in his teens his father, a great Dickens fan, used to read Dickens aloud (in English) to him and his brother. When Wilson also tried to do the same for Jane Austen who, for him, was, with Dickens, one of "the two incomparably greatest English novelists", Nabokov's first reaction was: "I dislike Jane and am prejudiced, in fact, against all women writers. Could never see anything in *Pride and Prejudice*." When Wilson, however, suggested that he ought to read *Mansfield Park*, Nabokov did so and adopted that too for his course. Whether he changed his overall opinion of Jane Austen and of women novelists remains unknown.

Nabokov and Wilson disagreed also about two outstanding recent Russian writers, Pasternak and Alexander Solzhenitsyn. Wilson had a very high opinion of *Doctor Zhivago* and wrote a great deal about it (it is true that some of the things he wrote were rather fanciful). Nabokov, whose opinion of Soviet literature was extensive, used to exempt from exclusion Pasternak's early poetry and such writers as Olesha, Zamyatin and Zoshchenko. Of *Doctor Zhivago* he had, however, a very poor opinion. For some reason (perhaps because by that time their literary disagreements had become too many and too obvious) he abstained from arguing about it with Wilson. But in a letter to me he called it "Putrid, talentless, false, and quite entr[illegible]beral", and expressed surprise that I could have been "carried away" by "the turgid Soviet[illegible] stream which is dragging it along".

As for Solzhenitsyn, Nabokov in

King William Park

The mountains must have watched it, the startled eyes
of swamp-life and the long-shinned estuary birds :
that tidal glitter curling out to sea
for the last time, abandoning its mud.
Then centuries of minute adjustments, rivers
changing their beds,
the shifting work of sloblands under the sky
and fibrous growths toughening, holding their own.

Fowlers, fishers and settlers, intricate drains,
channels and cargoes, chimneys, streetlamps and trams ;
but always the brickwork tilting, buildings on stilts,
the tide-surge echoes creeping out of the ground
yearly to meet the rainfall and shaping themselves
to crests and troughs in the tarmac, undulant cobbles.
Or pouring their excess out of sudden wounds
in streets miles inland.

Here, where the park is, breakers found a shore
to bury shells in, jetsam a place to lie.
Daily the winos spend their bleary rage
in squabbles among the benches,
or sing their hearts out, searching for a song
on a green patch with trees beside a junction.
And knee-capped boys on crutches raise their heads
to follow us past the railings,

wintry eyes asking how far we have come
and where we are going. A terraced marsh away
sludge-pumps have sucked a resting-place for stone ;
the blocks of a new hospital are hauled
through scaffolding, past windows where the sun
flames in the evenings gloriously, or the rain
drifts into soundless networks on its way
to the earth-clogged ears in the groundwork, the listening shells.

Frank Ormsby

his very last letter to Wilson must have called him "third-rate". This sentence is excised in Karlinsky's edition. And so is Wilson's reaction to it in his last letter to Nabokov. But in the earlier volume of Wilson's *Letters on Literature and Politics: 1912-1972*, selected and edited by Elena Wilson, we find his reply intact: "I don't agree that Solzhenitsyn is third-rate." He then went on to say (and this we do find in Karlinsky's volume too) "I think he is remarkable, though somewhat monotonous—not in a class with Pasternak . . .". In the light of this I fail to understand how Karlinsky could write in his introduction: "Their last meeting of minds on literary matters was a negative one, when they agreed on what is surely an undervaluation of the talent of Alexander Solzhenitsyn whom Nabokov dismissed with greater severity than did Wilson" !

One of the affinities between Nabokov and Wilson, where literature was concerned, was their love for Pushkin and his work. Wilson came to know Pushkin before meeting Nabokov, through reading Prince D. Svyatopolk-Mirsky's (D. S. Mirsky's) book on Pushkin published in 1926. It was, in fact, Mirsky's book (he also knew his excellent *History of Russian Literature*) that prompted Wilson to learn Russian in order to read Pushkin in the original. Pushkin played an important part in his correspondence with Nabokov. By the time they met, Wilson had already published his essays on *Eugene Onegin* and on *The Bronze Horseman*; he also did a translation of the latter into rhythmic prose, and Nabokov liked it. Soon after their meeting he was to write an introduction to Nabokov's translation of *Mozart and Salieri*. He very much liked Nabokov's verse translations from Pushkin. Much space in the correspondence is devoted to Nabokov's attempts to clear up the confusion in Wilson's mind about Pushkin's prosody: for a long time Wilson could not grasp the important differences between Russian and English versification.

But it was over Pushkin and his *Eugene Onegin* that they finally quarrelled and their friendship and intercourse were irreparably broken. There is no point in going over in detail here that well-known quarrel, but, despite my own long friendship with Nabokov, in the course of which I also felt sometimes, as did Wilson, "chilled to exasperation", I feel I must frankly say that in my opinion Wilson was right in criticizing Nabokov's translation (as distinct from his painstaking and valuable commentary, although he had some objections to that, too, as well as to much in Nabokov's interpretation of Pushkin's novel) not so much for its "literalness" as for the use of rare, unfamiliar, outlandish and, in the final count, very *un-Pushkinian* words. As another competent critic of Nabokov's *Onegin*, Professor Alexander Gerschenkron, put it, "the translation can and should be studied, but . . . it cannot be read".

Wilson did not conceal the fact that he preferred Walter Arndt's rhymed translation, which had appeared the year before and was mercilessly lambasted by Nabokov. Though admitting that Arndt was "no great poet", Wilson said that his version was much closer to *Onegin* than "any of the others [he had] sampled" and was likely "to give the reader a better idea of what the poem sounds like in Russian than Nabokov's so tortured version". Since then there has been a new rhymed translation by Charles Johnston. It is undoubtedly the best to date and has been justly praised by John Bayley in the *TLS*.

It is perhaps worth mentioning one more affinity between Nabokov and Wilson; they were both irreligious (Nabokov said once that religion had meaning for him only in literature) and took especially negative attitudes to all established churches. And both of them saw their beloved Pushkin as an atheist—a view to which some modern Russian thinkers would never subscribe.

Though not himself a specialist, Wilson could also take a real interest in Nabokov's pursuit of lepidoptery, and Nabokov wrote to him about his butterfly hunting in Arizona, Colorado, Utah and California, illustrating his letters with drawings of butterflies. In one letter Nabokov exclaimed: "What are the joys of literature compared to tracking an ovipositing *Caleophrys sheridani* Edw. to its food plant or boxing undescribed moths from the lobby windows of J. Laughlin's very pleasant though somewhat primitive hotel !"

Backlands boy

By Denis Brass

GRACILIANO RAMOS :
Childhood
Translated by Celso de Oliveira
174pp. Peter Owen. £6.50.

The Brazilian north-east is the setting for a remarkable group of novelists who wrote in the 1930s of the colourful but declining feudal society there. All share a common concern for the economic and social deprivation of their people, and from their own living contacts they produced some of the best social novels of the American continent.

Graciliano Ramos (1892-1953) was perhaps the best of them and *Infância* (1945), now translated as *Childhood*, is the account of his difficult early years in the interior of the State of Alagoas. The periodic droughts in that region had ruined his father's attempt to be a cattleman. This early experience he later distilled in his novel *Vidas Secas* (Parched Lives), in which a Backlands half-caste, together with his wife and children, and their dog Baleia, flees the drought, under an oppressive indigo sky, to search for a little moisture hidden in the cracks of the river-bed. The parents in that novel are animal-like in their monosyllabic grunts, and in their indifference to, or fear of, human language, and this harks back to Graciliano's own childhood, when he had enormous difficulty in learning to read and acquiring books. He lived under acute analysis—his father tried to beat the alphabet into him; but at the age of nine he was still illiterate. The fear and distrust of authority is another theme common both to the novel and to the present book, in which Graciliano gives an acute analysis of his father's weakness when faced with an importuning vagabond and a police officer, an incident which "must have contributed to the distrust that authority inspires in me".

Graciliano sees no solution for a society where men are violent and women feminized—seduced and abandoned by the rich and powerful. In one episode in *Childhood* he tells of his illegitimate sister who "prayed and ate with her head down". The father ignores this daughter, who is a drudge in the house but gets sacrificed to a well-off neighbour. He discourages the relationship—weddings are status symbols and cost money; the girl elopes, only to be abandoned a few years later.

The painful yellow boots one remembers from *Vidas Secas* turn out to be a metaphor for the whole of Graciliano's childhood. He was brought up near the corral and animals; in their violence and their innocence, were among his first teachers. Like other Brazilian writers of his generation, he is also haunted by a fear of ghosts. The sight of a charred and rotting corpse sets him brooding. He attends the burial of a child, an "angel"—so called because the old Jesuit missionaries always concentrated on baptizing children who, as quasi-innocents, would go straight to heaven. Grown Amerindians were tougher nuts, who either resisted conversion or quickly lapsed. Like many small boys in a Catholic culture, Graciliano accepted becoming a server at mass, an apprenticeship he welcomed as a respite from arithmetic and catechism. He comments drily that many priestly vocations may start like this. Later he almost entered a seminary, but he muffed the altar movements; he could not control the chain of the thurible and sent the incense up in clouds of sparks. He was relieved of his duties on the sanctum and his faith cooled.

The translation is marred by infelicities of idiom and downright misstranslations, e.g., "vicar" for *vigário*; "resign" for *resignar* (to bicker); "oversized ant [*sic*]" for *formigão* (seminarist); "disappointment" for *transtôrno* (upset or discomfiture).

In an ugly time

By Geoff Butler

ROLF HOCHHUTH :
A German Love Story
Translated by John Brownjohn
269pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson £6.50.
0 2977 7732 7

"We are about to speak of very ugly matters which, for more than one reason, we should prefer to leave unsaid. We are, however, compelled to turn to happenings which come within our province. . . ." Rolf Hochhuth adopts these words, from *The Charterhouse of Parma*, to express regret, roughly a third of the way through his latest investigation, *A German Love Story*, that he/we "could no longer set eyes on that quarry down there, almost overgrown with elder, without recalling what human beings had once done there to another of their kind". But Stendhal's declaration might well have been quoted sooner, as a motto for the whole work, possibly for the entire *oeuvre*, in which it has now been placed.

Doubtless sincere, such regret has a Lutheran quality about it: Hochhuth is not apologizing; it seems he, too, "can do no other". Even when he has attempted comedy, his "province" has to all appearances been vitally dependent on "ugly matters". Pius XII and the extermination of the Jews during the Second World War, terror-bombing and the death of General Sikorski, urban guerrillas and the projected overthrow of America's capitalist oligarchy, the treatment of the homeless in the Federal Republic, class warfare at home and abroad, the imbalance of power between the sexes: these are the topics to which he has devoted most of his attention hitherto; and the "German love story" which culminates in that quarry—with the legalized murder of a lover for having made love—is as characteristic of his thematic range, and as well larded with moral-cum-political observations as any he has ever told or dramatized.

Sexual intercourse between a German woman and an alien was a serious offence in Hitler's Reich, and for the male it carried the death penalty. Attempts to stamp out such "intimacy" led to mountains of official correspondence, exemption from active service for countless able-bodied men, and a series of executions whose precise number has never been ascertained". Among the most alien aliens in Nazi eyes were, of course, the Poles captured by German troops in September 1939. (Not until August 1940 was it decreed that if the crime were committed by a Frenchman, British or Belgian prisoner-of-war, he was "to be punished with death in exactly the same way".) *A German Love Story*—which turns out to be a revised version of *Eine Liebe in Deutschland* (1978)—presents and documents the harrowing case of one such captive. Stasiek Zasada, twenty-one, sent to work in a village near the Swiss border, loved and was loved by his German employer's German neighbour, Pauline Krop, thirty-six, and was found out. He was hanged, Pauline was packed off to Ravensbrück, but she survived and was interviewed by Hochhuth nor so very long ago, as were a number of her fellow citizens who remember the affair. With one or two exceptions (notably "practising politicians" such as Hans Karl Filbinger, the discredited former premier of Baden-Württemberg whom Hochhuth censures several times in passing), the names of the living have been changed, a sort of amnesty which the author (b 1931) considers appropriate when those too young to have experienced Hitlerism seek to pass judgment on those who were in the thick of it.

In any case Hochhuth's main concern is not the complicity of particular individuals in a particular act of savagery, but "the spirit of the age" in which such acts became almost commonplace. He devotes the fourth of his twenty-four chapters to this theme and thereafter repeats with unstinting frequency the conclusion he finds inescapable: that the spirit of the age was sick, it was an illness of the mind, a paranoia, a "mental disease with which Hitler and his most notable germ-carriers had infected the nation" and which, incidentally, at least on one occasion, even spread to Britain: "it declared itself, not in racial mania but in the delusion that no large British armies would figure in the current war, as Churchill assured Harry Hopkins, Roosevelt's special envoy, on January 10, 1941". It would be a pity if such asides were seen to spoil the mixture of informed comment, debatable good sense and persuasive rumination which adds up to encompass.

On his old favourite Churchill (the subject of his second long chapter); on Goebbels (Goebbels able diarist, self-deceiver, elephant), Göering ("apart from himself . . . the most culpable mass murderer in the Third Reich"), and the nature of Nazism; on the Poles (whimsical, by virtue of their theft of the Enigma cipher machine, of "the most bloodless and momentous victory of the Second World War"); on the efficacy of the secret services; on the Allies' demand for unconditional surrender; on Germany's defeats and their link with a "long tradition of contempt for the intellectuals, for reason and the things of the mind"; on the Grimms' fairy-tale of—see—the fisherman and his wife and on the applicability to twentieth-century German history—on these and much else besides Hochhuth's "novel" is well worth reading, a further monument to his priorities, his personal and professional. At the top, for all to see, is his rejection of Goethe's maxim that injustice was easier to tolerate than disorder".

A German Love Story does its translator, John Brownjohn, great credit, demonstrating a care and skill that might now be brought to bear on other German writers.

Writing it out

By Joyce Crick

BOTHO STRAUSS :
Devotion
Translated by Sophie Wilkins
120pp. Chatto and Windus. £5.50
0 7011 2421 0

This is the first novel of a highly literary and self-conscious young man. The reader's heart sinks. But, after all, so was Goethe's *Werther*. This one is an internalized account of a bereavement and of a partial recovery from it. Hannah, to whom the account proper is dedicated (hence the title, *Die Widmung*; *Devotion* will not quite do), has walked out for good on Richard, a very modern, not-so-young ("thirty-one years old and no biography") young man. She actually turns up, de-mythologized and elusive, at the end. Her loss is a kind of death of the soul for him, though he is conscious enough of his place in the history of sensibility to query whether this is only "an approximate and metaphysical truth. Is so much else in the conceptual realm of psycho-analysis". The act of writing is his life-line, and the greater part of this short text consists of his jottings of extended reflections on the nexus of working through the stages of his grief to some kind of resolution. It begins and ends in the real world of the third person; its centre is a passage through a bout of first-person introspection. From regressive flights inwards, it turns into a solitary's dialogue with a missing partner and into (almost) independent essays and reflections. Some of these last—on Klee and the historicity of sensibility and moral values, for example—are actually interesting in themselves and not merely because they are part of a novelist's demonstration of thought freeing itself from its objective obsession. But that is part of the strategy. It is a very clever novel.

Delicate, intelligent, sometimes even humorous, with more variation than this summary would suggest. *Devotion* is a surprising throw-back to earlier German literary models of inner sensibility. Once locked in his flat with his writing-pad and his slow-tempo tying fridge, our narrator goes back to draw sustenance from Hannah's grief—and observes his laconic mode of expressing it compares himself to Peter Schlemihl with out his shadow, and even reflects with Nietzsche and Thomas Mann that a little disease can help the sensibility. In some ways this novel is a *Werther* in second hand. The sensibility of both fictional heroes is nourished by their reading. Werther's reading in his desperate days ranges from Homer's clarity to Ossian's clouds while Richard's discovery moves from Novalis to Romantic to Turgenev the Realist. More than that, the act of literary therapy is now internal to the novel, fictional, wherever it is. Goethe, writing to free himself of his own sense of loss, is essentially real. This kind of Chinese-box fiction does call into question the ontological status of the author: "I suppose it all sounds shyly fairy", or "But then goes for most of us, doesn't it?" which become increasingly tedious, and the prose sometimes descends to rapturous banality: "But there are times when men and earth are one, when the pulse of living beats strong, when life is brimming with promise and the future stretches confidently

Rural restorations

By James Lasdun

J. L. CARR :
A Month in the Country
111p. Brighton: Harvester. £6.50.
0 85527 328 3

An author who tells you towards the end of his book that his tale, or part of it, has been "poignantly sad" arouses suspicion. J. L. Carr has attempted to write a "poignantly sad" story, but his need to draw attention to the fact is an indication of at least partial failure.

A Month in the Country is, as its title suggests, a pastoral idyll. Birkin, a shell-shocked survivor of the First World War, comes, in the summer of 1920, to the village of Oxgodby. Ostensibly he is there to uncover what is believed to be a medieval wall-painting in the church, but his real motive is to recover peace of mind after the shattering experiences of Passchendaele and a broken marriage. Inevitably the restoration of the painting becomes linked with the restoration of Birkin's life, as one gradually reveals itself to be a masterpiece, and the other, nurtured by the rural harvests and the

Oxgodby (complete with horse-cart picnic excursions and a bumpkin called Moses) returns to something approaching tranquillity. A pattern of such correspondences is established and heightened with the aid of hints and cross-references, which also introduce an element of mystery.

That, at any rate, is the intention. In practice what sets out to be hauntingly enigmatic all too often turns out to be inconsequential, and one is left disappointed by the book's failure to provide anything but a few nostalgic sighs along the lines of "We can ask and ask but we can't have again what seemed ours forever".

There are moments of real promise, as when the agnostic Birkin finds himself having to deliver a sermon to a congregation of devout chapelgoers, but their potential is rarely developed. Moreover, the narrative is studded with little self-conscious asides—"I suppose it all sounds shyfairy", or "But then goes for most of us, doesn't it?" which become increasingly tedious, and the prose sometimes descends to rapturous banality: "But there are times when men and earth are one, when the pulse of living beats strong, when life is brimming with promise and the future stretches confidently



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UNIVERSITY OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA
(PORT MORESBY)
Applications are invited for the post of ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN of the NEW GUINEA COLLECTION in the University Library. Applicants should preferably be university graduates with a recognised professional qualification in librarianship. Candidates for bibliographical experience in the South Pacific area will be given preference. Third World librarianship. An ability to face problems calmly and a sense of humour are essential. Since the New Guinea Collection contains a fine collection of church records and other manuscripts an interest in archives would be an additional qualification. The appointee will be responsible to the New Guinea Collection Librarian, and will be the principal assistant in charge of the department with a staff of five. The main duties will be compiling the annual New Guinea bibliography (which is effectively the national bibliography) and also the New Guinea Periodical Index. Both these bibliographic tools are extremely important and are of great value to scholars interested in this area. He/she will also be responsible for collecting government and Papua publications dealing with Papua New Guinea, and may be asked to help with cataloguing.
Salary: Assistant Librarian (Lecturer) Scale, £4,581-£5,130 per annum. Assistant Librarian (Senior Lecturer) Scale, £5,581-£6,130 per annum. Three year contract, with provision for contract renewal research / post-free accommodation / passages / settling-in allowance / annual overseas leave / subsidised air travel / gratuity / medical scheme. Assistance will be given to cover expenses incurred in connection with travel out to and return from New Guinea.
Detailed applications (6 copies) including the names of two referees, should be sent by registered post and despatched by 13 June 1980 to: Assistant Secretary (Staff), The University, P.O., Papua New Guinea. Applicants should also send a copy of their application by telex to Mike Pinniger, University, P.O., Papua New Guinea, telex number 22111 IA. Further information may be obtained from Mike Pinniger, 11 Lonsdale Road, London NW6 6RD. Telephone 01-624 0541. Applicants are advised to telex their applications.

DUNDEE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN
APPLICATIONS are invited from qualified LIBRARIANS for the above Post. The duties are mostly concerned with cataloguing and classification, with some indexing and typing. A knowledge of computer applications would be advantageous.
The basic salary scale is £4,581 to £5,130 per annum.
For further details and an application form write to the Librarian, Dundee College of Education, Gardyne Road, Broughty Ferry, Dundee DD5 1NY.
Completed forms should be returned by Monday, 19th May, 1980.

LIBRARIANS
DORSET COUNTY COUNCIL
COUNTY LIBRARY SERVICE
SECOND IN CHARGE
WINTON GROUP (EAST AREA)
(Post LB.1691)
You must be CHARTERED LIBRARIANS, preferably with public library experience.
Salary within Librarians' Scale, above Bar, £4,581 to £5,130.
SENIOR ASSISTANT (PART-TIME) (25 HRS) / WAREHAM LIBRARY
WAREHAM GROUP (WEST AREA)
(Post LB.1692)
Preference will be given to candidates who have passed Part 2 (Final) Examination of the Library Association or equivalent.
Salary: £2,118 to £2,782 (bar), £3,190. The bar is applicable.
For both posts application forms returnable by May 16 and further details from County Librarian, Colliton Park, Dorchester DT1 1XJ.
Please quote post number.

INSTITUTE OF DIRECTORS
LIBRARY ASSISTANT required for busy post in library and reception. The business library is well-stocked and interesting. Neatness and willingness are more important than experience. Typing desirable. Salary around £5,000 plus 4 weeks' (regular salary reviews).
Further details are available from the Librarian, Institute of Directors, 116 Pall Mall, London SW1Y 5ED (01-839 1233).



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